

# The Daily News Digest

Friday, July 09, 2010

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## DAILY NEWS DIGEST ARTICLES

July 9, 2010

### Section I: Hydro-Fracking

#### The fracking EPA meeting in Ft. Worth

Bluedaze, 07/09/10

*Summary: The EPA hydraulic fracturing meeting was standing room only tonight. My Cliff Notes version: Texan citizens are PO'd and want regulation NOW rather than waiting for 2 years for EPA to complete their study. There were some amazing stories of water contamination and some people brought show and tell samples. Industry ~~supporters~~ apologists said that there has never been any water fracking water contamination, we are full of fear and all we needed to accept drinking that cruddy stuff in the show and tell samples is "education."*

#### Meeting draws more than 600

Denton Record-Chronicle, 07/08/10

*Summary: More than 600 people filled a hotel ballroom in downtown Fort Worth in the first of four public meetings to be held nationwide on hydraulic fracturing. Congress ordered the Environmental Protection Agency to revisit the issue after reports of groundwater contamination following gas well drilling had emerged around the country. The federal agency first gave the process — which pumps water, sand and chemicals into rock formations in order to release the natural gas — a green light in 2005, paving the way for it to be exempted from a host of environmental regulations.*

#### EPA Hears Citizen Concerns, Industry Assurances About Gas Drilling

KERA, 07/09/10

*Summary: Almost 600 crowded a Fort Worth hearing Thursday night to tell the EPA what they want from a study on hydraulic fracturing. That's the drilling process used to produce natural gas from the Barnett Shale in North Texas. The EPA's national study will look at the effects of the drilling on drinking water. More than 9,000 wells are now producing natural gas from the Barnett Shale, a geological formation beneath at least 17 North Texas counties. The EPA predicts that within a decade shale gas will comprise more than 20% of the total US gas supply.*

#### Fort Worth meeting on gas drilling process draws heated response

Ft. Worth Star-Telegram, 07/08/10

*Summary: It wasn't an event for the meek and indecisive, nor for those seeking middle ground. A capacity crowd of about 600 gathered at the downtown Hilton Fort Worth hotel Thursday night, and dozens of speakers voiced either grave concerns about -- or enthusiastic support for -- the increasingly controversial hydraulic fracturing process that has made possible drilling booms such as the Barnett Shale play in North Texas.*

#### Local Fracking Debate Catches Ear Of EPA

CBS, KERA, 07/08/10

*Summary: It's a concern for many living in the Barnett Shale. The drilling debate drew hundreds of people to a meeting Thursday night in downtown Fort Worth. The Environmental Protection Agency is discussing a massive new study on the safety of hydraulic fracturing, a process used to extract minerals from the ground. It's a big concern in the small Denton County town of Dish. "On top of our air quality we've had some water quality issues" said Mayor Calvin Tillman.*

#### Flaming Faucets: Natural Gas In a Bowie Water Well

News Channel 6, 07/08/10

*Summary: We're looking into concerns about the water near Bowie, where natural gas is leaking into a family's well water. Both the Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Railroad Commission are investigating. The leak is so big, one family can actually set their faucet on fire. For about three months, Stephen Brock has been hearing a gurgling sound in his water faucets -- the kind you'd hear if you have air in your pipes.*

## **Section II: Texas Air**

### **Texas Regulator Offers Proposal on Refinery Permits After EPA Challenge**

Bloomberg Businessweek, 07/08/10

*Summary: Texas's environmental regulator, which oversees more than one-fourth of U.S. refining capacity, proposed changes to air permits targeted by the Environmental Protection Agency for failing to comply with federal law. The plan would allow refiners and chemicals producers to voluntarily seek state permits setting emissions limits on specific processing units, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality said today. The U.S. EPA said earlier this year that permits for operations owned by such companies as Chevron Corp., Valero Energy Corp. and BP Plc didn't comply with the Clean Air Act because pollution limits were only for whole plants.*

### **Proposed plant loses ruling, 2 judges fault coal project, but enviro. groups still wary**

Houston Chronicle, 07/07/10

*Summary: Two Texas administrative law judges have sided with environmentalists against a permit for a new coal- and petroleum coke-fired power plant in Matagorda County. The judges found that Houston-based White Stallion Energy Center's plans for a 1,200-megawatt plant failed on three points, including the quality of the data used to make conclusions about air quality in the area. Environmentalists who oppose the White Stallion plant said the judges' ruling did not go as far as they would like, but it possibly delayed the project by as much as six months.*

## **Section III: Oil Spill – Day 81**

### **BP to Supply More Detail on New Well Cap, Does Not Yet Have Green Light to Try It**

BNA's Daily Environment, 07/09/10

*Summary: BP Plc must await a decision from federal officials on whether to try to put a new cap on the leaking Macondo oil well in the Gulf of Mexico, and no decision has been made yet, a company spokesman said July 8. Earlier in the day, Thad Allen, the recently retired Coast Guard admiral in charge of the federal response to the oil spill, sent a letter to Bob Dudley, chief managing director of BP Group, giving Dudley 24 hours to provide a detailed timeline on the "decision points" for the plan for a new cap.*

### **Court Rejects Moratorium on Drilling in the Gulf**

NY Times, 07/08/10

*Summary: A federal appeals court on Thursday turned down the Obama administration's effort to enforce a six-month moratorium on deepwater drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. A three-judge panel of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, in New Orleans, ruled shortly after a hearing in a lawsuit filed by companies that claim they are being financially crippled by the suspension of drilling. The Interior Department said the moratorium was necessary because of the uncertainties about the cause of the BP oil well blowout in April, a shortage of response equipment and a need to write strict new drilling rules. The moratorium was struck down by a lower court on June 22 by a federal judge who found it arbitrary and economically ruinous to industry.*

### **EPA: Moderate health concerns with Gulf air**

Argus Press, 07/08/10

*Summary: The Environmental Protection Agency says the air in some places along the Louisiana coast poses a health risk to vulnerable people. The EPA says recent air sampling shows a moderate health risk in Venice and Grand Isle, two Louisiana towns about 50 miles from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill site. The agency says anyone unusually sensitive to low-quality air should avoid "prolonged or heavy exertion." EPA's warning comes as concerns grow that the Gulf oil spill may be fouling not just the water and shores but also the air. The agency says the levels of chemicals found in air samples have not been linked directly to the BP spill. But odor-causing pollutants associated with oil have been detected.*

## **Transferring oil from broken well an option for BP**

AP, 07/09/10

*Summary: The first of two relief wells being drilled to stop the Gulf oil gusher could be done by the end of the month, BP officials say, but if that doesn't succeed, one backup being considered is transferring the crude to non-producing underwater wells that are miles away. BP would run the flow through pipelines across the floor of the Gulf of Mexico, said retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, the Obama administration's point man on the crisis. "That would take some construction and some time. It would probably move us into the late August timeframe," Allen said.*

## **BP: Gulf oil spill could be stopped this month**

USA Today, 07/08/10

*Summary: BP is moving to fix its gushing Gulf oil well by July 27, weeks ahead of the deadline the energy giant is discussing publicly, the Wall Street Journal reports. "In a perfect world with no interruptions, it's possible to be ready to stop the well between July 20 and July 27," BP managing director Bob Dudley told the Journal. Dudley added that stopping the well in July is threatened by hurricane season and is "unlikely."*

## **BP dampens hope of early leak fix**

Reuters, 07/08/10

*Summary: BP dampened hopes that it could plug its leaking Gulf of Mexico well sooner than forecast on Thursday, while a battle between the U.S. government and the oil industry over a deepwater drilling ban heads to court. BP stuck to its August target to complete a relief well to halt the worst oil spill in U.S. history, after a press report raised hopes the company could stem the 80-day-old leak sooner. The head of BP's Gulf Coast restoration unit, Bob Dudley, told the Wall Street Journal that it could be possible to stop the well between July 20 and July 27 "in a perfect world with no interruptions."*

## **Issuing of new drill ban over BP depends on case**

Reuters, 07/08/10

*Summary: The Obama administration said on Thursday it will immediately issue a revised ban on deepwater drilling if an appeals court does not allow it to reinstate the six-month moratorium it imposed in the wake of the BP oil spill. However, it will not impose a new drilling ban if the federal court in New Orleans supports its initial moratorium, an Interior Department official told Reuters. A hearing before a three-judge appeals panel is scheduled for 3 p.m. CDT/4 p.m. EDT (2000 GMT) on Thursday on the ban imposed during the investigation of what caused the April 20 drilling rig explosion that killed 11 men and triggered the worst oil spill in U.S. history.*

## **U.S. drilling moratorium to take bigger output bite**

Reuters, 07/08/10

*Summary: The Obama administration's contested moratorium on deepwater drilling will take a larger portion out of U.S. oil production next year than previously thought, the government's energy forecasting agency said on Wednesday. Oil production next year is expected to be cut by 82,000 barrels per day, or almost 30 million barrels total, due to delayed or canceled drilling caused by the moratorium, the Energy Information Administration said. That is 17 percent more from the 70,000 bpd in lost output the agency predicted just last month. Monthly production losses could reach nearly 100,000 bpd by December 2011, the EIA said.*

## **Is a Deepwater Drilling Moratorium Smart?**

Times, 07/08/10

*Summary: Even though a moratorium will economically hurt the Gulf region—and there's a risk that deepwater rigs will move to other parts of the world, at least temporarily—I think a timeout makes sense. But Lisa Margonelli—director of the energy policy initiative at the New America Foundation—has a pretty strong counter argument. She notes that for all the attention that the BP oil spill has rightly placed on drilling in U.S. waters, we import most of our oil—61% in May, the month after the accident—and much of that crude comes from countries with far poorer environmental records than we have.*

## **BP plans better outreach to boat owners**

USA Today, 07/08/10

*Summary: rs to help contain the Gulf of Mexico oil spill after complaints the company hasn't gotten enough private vessels involved. Since April 30, BP has contracted with 8,500 boats from Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana to respond to the spill. The contracts are modeled after the oil company's Vessels of Opportunity program for private boats that pitch in during a disaster.*

## **BP to lease Lamar-Dixon for storage**

Baton Rouge, 07/08/10

*Summary: -month lease allowing BP to use an eight-acre area in one of Lamar-Dixon Expo Center's parking lots for equipment storage in case of a hurricane, officials said Wednesday. The parish and BP signed the deal Tuesday in Parish President Tommy Martinez's office, said Rick Webre, director of the parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. Martinez said BP is also interested in using a building and outside barns at the 247-acre facility near Gonzales and Interstate 10.*

## **Cleaning Up on the Oil Spill: Who's Making Money?**

Time, 07/08/10

*Summary: The Gulf spill is a windfall for the dozens of companies that can provide ships, crews, equipment and expertise. Clean Harbors of Norwell, Mass., is expected to generate \$300 million in sales from the Gulf spill in the next year alone. Waste Management of Houston has been hired by BP to cart away and landfill contaminated sand and other oily waste. Nalco of Naperville, Ill., estimates it will sell \$40 million worth of the dispersant Corexit. The company set to get the biggest piece of that pie is a little-known firm set up in part by BP.*

## **Obama team asks BP to explain new sealing plan on oil spill**

USA Today, 07/08/10

*Summary: The White House has sent BP a letter asking if it can speed up new capping plans for the Gulf Coast oil spill because of the prospect of bad weather later this summer. In the letter, oil spill point person Thad Allen asks for details about BP's plan to remove a "top hat" that has slowed down the Gulf Coast oil spill, and replace it with a "sealing cap" that would capture even more of the oil. One problem: Between the removal of the top hat, and the replacement of the sealing cap, the oil flow will temporarily increase.*

## **Relief well drilling ahead of schedule**

CNN, 07/08/10

*Summary: The first relief well BP is drilling in the Gulf of Mexico could intercept the leaking Deepwater Horizon well in seven to 10 days, the man heading the federal response to the oil crisis said Thursday. Retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen said the length of time it will take to seal the well will depend on "where the oil is coming up through, where they can intercept, where they can put the mud in, where they can put the cement plug."*

## **New batfish species found under Gulf oil spill**

Reuters, 07/08/10

*Summary: Researchers have discovered two previously unknown species of bottom-dwelling fish in the Gulf of Mexico, living right in the area affected by the BP oil spill. Researchers identified new species of pancake batfishes, a flat fish rarely seen because of the dark depths they favor. They are named for the clumsy way they "walk" along the sea bottom, like a bat crawling.*

## **Tropical depression soaks Mexico**

Reuters, 07/08/10

*Summary: A tropical depression churned into the western Gulf of Mexico coast on Thursday near Mexico's border with Texas, a region badly flooded by Hurricane Alex last week, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said. The depression was starting to make landfall around mid-morning but the NHC said it was unlikely to become a tropical storm.*

## **New storm heads for swamped Texas-Mexico border**

AP, 07/08/10

*Summary: A rain-packed tropical depression neared a midday collision with the Texas-Mexico border region on Thursday, a new threat to cities already struggling with floods along the Rio Grande and its tributaries. Police in Laredo, Texas, were evacuating people in low-lying areas as the rain-swollen Rio Grande rose to more than 30 feet (9 meters) above flood stage and forced closure of at least two bridges linking Mexico and the U.S.*

## **New spill factor: La Nina could add to storms**

MSNBC, 07/08/10

*Summary: A La Nina weather pattern, the opposite of its more infamous cousin El Nino, will likely ramp up in July and August, potentially boosting hurricane formation in the Gulf of Mexico, the U.S. Climate Prediction Center forecast on Thursday. "La Nina conditions are likely to develop during July-August 2010," the CPC, an office under the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, stated in its monthly update. La Nina spawns colder-than-normal waters in the equatorial Pacific Ocean. In contrast, El Nino is an abnormal warming of those waters. Both wreak havoc in the weather from the U.S. to India and occur every three to four years.*

## **Angle: \$20b escrow a 'slush fund'; oil companies shouldn't be driven out**

MSNBC, 07/08/10

*Summary: Sharron Angle's views were on display again, when in a radio interview -- sent around by Democrats and written about on left-leaning writer Greg Sargent's blog -- Angle called the \$20 billion BP escrow a "slush fund" -- despite BP agreeing to set up the fund. Angle joins a chorus of right-wing candidates, elected members like Joe Barton, and talking heads like Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck, who have also referred to account that way. Money from the fund, which is being independently administered, is to be distributed to those affected by the Gulf oil spill. She said the government is "overreacting," the Environmental Protection Agency is "all about money," and that "the petroleum industry shouldn't be penalized for one bad person's actions.*

## **Fla. gov calls legislature for oil drilling ban**

AP, 07/08/10

*Summary: Gov. Charlie Crist has called a special session of the state Legislature to get a constitutional ban on offshore oil drilling in Florida waters on the November ballot. Crist on Thursday said the session will be held July 20 to July 23.*

## **Forecast for Gulf impacting spill containment plan**

AP, 07/08/10

*Summary: Rough weather forecasts in the Gulf of Mexico could force BP and Obama administration officials to speed up plans to connect a third containment vessel to the blown-out undersea oil well. Weather has already delayed plans to hook up the Helix Producer containment vessel that could collect more than 1 million barrels of oil per day. Officials have been waiting until the Helix was in place before replacing the current "top cap" with a tighter-fitting "sealing cap", a maneuver that requires eight days of calm weather.*

## **Allen: Relief well timing depends on oil's spread**

AP, 07/08/10

*Summary: A relief well being drilled deep into the seafloor of the Gulf of Mexico to shut down the gushing well could be completed ahead of a long-set deadline of mid-August only if conditions are ideal, government and BP officials said Thursday. The relief well is currently the best hope for stanching the oil leak set off by the April 20 explosion aboard the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig, which killed 11 workers and began an environmental catastrophe for the region.*

## **Giant skimmer gets another test, but faces doubt**

AP, 07/08/10

*Summary: The giant Taiwanese oil skimmer known as 'A Whale' is getting another chance to prove its value in the Gulf of Mexico. But the leader of the federal response, Thad Allen, doubts the effectiveness of the "A Whale."*

## **Spill response chief sticks with mid-August date for capping BP well**

The Hill, 07/08/10

*Summary: Adm. Thad Allen, the top federal official overseeing the BP oil spill response, said Thursday that mid-August remains the target date for killing BP's out-of-control Gulf of Mexico well. Allen's comments follow widely circulated remarks by BP managing director Robert Dudley, who told The Wall Street Journal, "In a perfect world with no interruptions, it's possible to be ready to stop the well between July 20 and July 27."*

## **Reid foe Angle calls BP's oil spill escrow account a 'slush fund'**

The Hill, 07/08/10

*Summary: Nevada GOP Senate candidate Sharron Angle on Wednesday called the \$20 billion BP escrow account created under White House pressure a "slush fund" – echoing phrasing by Rep. Joe Barton (R-Texas) that Democrats pounced on to cast Republicans as handmaidens of oil companies. Angle's comment is sure to provide political ammunition for Democrats seeking to keep the Nevada seat in the hands of Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), who is locked in a tight race with her.*

## **Texas tar ball prompts soil, water sampling**

Corpus Christi Caller, 07/08/10

*Summary: Texas officials on Wednesday continued collecting soil and water samples along the state's coastline, part of their response plan after this week's confirmation that crude from the Gulf oil spill has made its way onto the state's shores. Biologists with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department are collecting the samples to give them a data baseline they will use to assess the spill's effect on Texas if more tar balls and oil are found.*

## **Tests show tar balls found in Texas come from BP well**

San Antonio Express, 07/07/10

*Summary: Tar balls continue to wash up along the Texas Coast, and all of the testing since the weekend points to a single source: BP's gushing well in the Gulf of Mexico. Testing confirmed Wednesday that tar balls found Monday on McFaddin Beach, near Port Arthur, came from the well, Coast Guard Petty Officer Richard Brahm said.*

## **Economic peril seen from offshore drilling ban**

Reuters, 07/07/10

*Summary: A Gulf of Mexico deepwater drilling ban has already cost offshore jobs in a nascent U.S. economic recovery and a lengthy moratorium will put the industry at peril, sector executives said on Wednesday. Their remarks came a day ahead of a court hearing on the moratorium imposed by the Obama administration, which says it is needed to prevent a repeat of the BP Plc well blowout that brought environmental havoc to the Gulf, polluting beaches, killing wildlife and scaring away tourists.*

## **New website for Deepwater Horizon information launched**

Baton Rouge Advocate, 07/07/10

*Summary: National Incident Commander Admiral Thad Allen today announced the launch of a new federal web portal, [www.RestoreTheGulf.gov](http://www.RestoreTheGulf.gov), dedicated to providing the American people with clear and accessible information and resources related to the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill response and recovery.*

*RestoreTheGulf.gov is designed to serve as a one-stop repository for news, data and operational updates related to administration-wide efforts to stop the BP oil leak and mitigate its impact on the environment, the economy and public health—unifying web resources across the administration and increasing public access to the latest information.*

## Section IV: Other

### **NAHB to Sue EPA over Lead Paint Regulations**

Business Wire, 07/08/10

*Summary: A coalition of housing industry groups joined the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) today in announcing plans to file a lawsuit against the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for removing the “opt-out” provision from its Lead: Renovation, Repair and Painting rule. The Lead: Renovation, Repair and Painting rule (LRRP) applies to homes constructed before 1978 when lead paint was banned. Its opt-out provision, which expired July 6, let consumers allow contractors to bypass extra preparation, clean-up and recordkeeping requirements in homes where there were no children under 6 or pregnant women, thus avoiding additional costs.*

### **Council briefed on solutions to water pressure issues**

Rowlett Lakeshore Times, 07/08/10

*Summary: The city council received a briefing from consultant Cheatham & Associates during its work session Tuesday regarding the cost to solve water pressure issues plaguing several parts of the city. The city is required by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to provide a minimum of 35 pounds per square inch to each household. The optimum pressure for a household to have is 60 psi. The pressure in Rowlett varies from 38 to more than 60 psi. The city has received several resident complaints about lack of water pressure.*

### **U.S. EPA Proposal Will Drive Cleanup Of Dirty Power Plants And Save Lives: Opinion**

Medical News Today, 07/08/10

*Summary: The cleanup of power plants is long overdue. Power plant pollution causes tens of thousands of premature deaths each year. These plants are major contributors to particulate pollution and ozone in the East and Midwest. The American Lung Association welcomes today's proposal by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reduce power plant pollution across 31 states. The Code Red and Orange days we've experienced in the Eastern U.S. this week underscore the need for healthier air. Today's action is an important step towards safe and healthy air across the region.*

### **Weighing Safety of Weed Killer in Drinking Water, EPA Relies Heavily on Industry-Backed Studies**

Huffington Post, 07/08/10

*Summary: Companies with a financial interest in a weed-killer sometimes found in drinking water paid for thousands of studies federal regulators are using to assess the herbicide's health risks, records of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency show. Many of these industry-funded studies, which largely support atrazine's safety, have never been published or subjected to an independent scientific peer review. Meanwhile, some independent studies documenting potentially harmful effects on animals and humans are not included in the body of research the EPA deems relevant to its safety review, the Huffington Post Investigative Fund has found. These studies include many that have been published in respected scientific journals.*

### **300,000 gas lines like those blamed in explosions run under Dallas-Fort Worth homes**

Dallas Morning News, 07/08/10

*Summary: About 300,000 steel gas supply lines serviced by Atmos Energy and blamed in several home explosions are in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, according to state regulators. The Texas Railroad Commission's most recent field inspection showed that more than 100,000 are in the Fort Worth service area alone. Another 97,741 are in Dallas, and thousands more are in surrounding suburbs.*

### **NM task force to plan expanded power line system**

AP, 07/08/10

*Summary: Gov. Bill Richardson has named a task force to plan the development of transmission lines in New Mexico to deliver power from renewable energy sources to customers. Richardson said Thursday the task force will assist the state's Renewable Energy Transmission Authority in drafting the power system blueprint.*



## **Tests for oil keep Lake Alan Henry closed**

Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, 07/08/10

*Summary: A future drinking water supply and popular summer spot could remain closed through the weekend as state officials try to determine the extent of the damage from an upstream oil spill earlier this week. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality sent off Lake Alan Henry water samples Wednesday to test for tell-tale traces of crude oil, regional director Jeff Bertl said. The commission closed the lake outside of Justiceburg indefinitely on Tuesday. Testing could take up to two weeks, Bertl said.*

## **Group wants turtle hatchling releases stopped**

Corpus Christi Caller, 07/08/10

*Summary: An environmental group wants the Padre Island National Seashore to stop releasing Kemp's ridley sea turtle hatchlings because of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. But seashore officials said Wednesday the releases are required and not doing so could hinder their natural instincts. More than 1,000 hatchlings have been released this week, said Donna Shaver, chief of sea turtle science and recovery at Padre Island National Seashore. An additional 400 will be released between Friday and Wednesday, she said.*

## **AEP Texas, Braselton Homes and Hogan Homes receive EPA award**

Corpus Christi Caller, 07/08/10

*Summary: AEP Texas, Braselton Homes and Hogan Homes on Wednesday received the 2010 Energy Star Leadership in Housing awards for promoting energy-efficient construction and environmental protection.*

## **Cracks Appear in Texas' RadWaste Program**

The Investigative Fund, 07/07/10

*Summary: Thanks to outspoken Texas politicians like Gov. Rick Perry and Rep. Joe Barton — who preach that regulation and oversight kills jobs — the state has garnered a reputation for being hostile toward health concerns, environmental controls and federal intervention. That's why recent news concerning two Texas agencies and their decision to take a more measured stance with private entities comes as great relief. The entity in question, Waste Control Specialists (WCS), was previously greenlighted to dispose of radioactive waste in a remote area in West Texas. WCS' owner, billionaire and major Republican donor Harold Simmons, has another holding, NL Industries, which is well-known in environmental justice circles for its legacy of lead- and uranium-contaminated sites around the country.*

## **Why the Congress Needs To Follow the EPA's Example: Opinion**

Care 2, 07/07/10

*Summary: The outlook for Congress passing legislation that would set a price on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions looks dim. However, the Environmental Protection Agency is setting an example on how to implement pollution regulation. GHG emissions are atmospheric pollution, after all. A good example is the EPA's proposed regulations to reduce pollution drifting across state lines in 31 eastern states and the District of Columbia. Called the transport rule, it would reduce power plant emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide to meet state-by-state emission reductions. The EPA is using the 'good neighbor' provision of the Clean Air Act to implement the transport rule, which would regulate upwind state emissions that contribute to pollution problems in downwind states.*

## **Recycled cigarette butts can keep steel from rusting**

USA Today, 07/07/10

*Summary: When you think recycling, newspapers, plastic bottles and aluminum cans probably come to mind. But one researcher wants to add cigarette butts to the list. Jun Zhao, a Ph.D. student in the School of Energy and Power Engineering at Xi'an Jiaotong University in China, and a team of scientists found that cigarette butts can be put to good use. Their study, which is published in the American Chemical Society journal Industrial & Engineering Chemistry Research, shows that extracts of cigarette butts that have been submerged in water can help prevent steel from rusting.*

## **Budget in the red, NOPD lays off 50 employees**

WWLTV, 07/06/10

*Summary: At the center of Valerie Wimberly's world is her 10-year-old son Terrence, Jr. They both call New Orleans East home, although nearby Methodist Hospital no longer does. Emergency response times are a concern here, especially now. At the city's 911 call center 23 operators have been laid off. "To have my service delayed for some reason because we don't have a call person to take a call, that's devastating," Wimberly said. At the New Orleans Police Department 27 other employees have also been let go, including 12 recruits, who up until Tuesday were still training in the police academy. The total of 50 NOPD employees are the latest casualties of a growing an estimated \$67 million budget deficit.*

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# Bluedaze

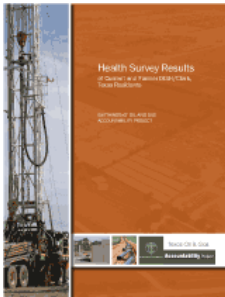
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Pictures taken in Wise County



FRIDAY, JULY 09, 2010

### The fracking EPA meeting in Ft. Worth

The EPA hydraulic fracturing meeting was standing room only tonight.

My Cliff Notes version:

Texan citizens are PO'd and want regulation NOW rather than waiting for 2 years for EPA to complete their study. There were some amazing stories of water contamination and some people brought show and tell samples.

Industry supporters apologists said that there has never been any water fracking water contamination, we are full of fear and all we needed to accept drinking that cruddy stuff in the show and tell samples is "education."



Some of the media coverage:

[Meeting draws more than 600](#)

[Water takes center stage in first of EPA forums on hydraulic fracturing](#)

Thursday, July 8, 2010

By Peggy Heinkel-Wolfe

Many representatives for the industry and for mineral owners came from Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas to underscore that hydraulic fracturing has been in use for more than 60 years and has safely stimulated more than 1 million wells around the country.

As one petroleum engineer made clear, *horizontal* hydraulic fracturing is VERY new. It's only been used for about 15 years. He said that industry should make an effort to be more honest.

[Fort Worth meeting on gas drilling process draws heated response](#)

By JACK Z. SMITH



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S.O.S. for DISH, Texas

## LOCAL NEWS

# Meeting draws more than 600

Water takes center stage in first of EPA forums on hydraulic fracturing

11:37 PM CDT on Thursday, July 8, 2010

By Peggy Heinkel-Wolfe / Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — More than 600 people filled a hotel ballroom in downtown Fort Worth in the first of four public meetings to be held nationwide on hydraulic fracturing.

Congress ordered the Environmental Protection Agency to revisit the issue after reports of groundwater contamination following gas well drilling had emerged around the country. The federal agency first gave the process — which pumps water, sand and chemicals into rock formations in order to release the natural gas — a green light in 2005, paving the way for it to be exempted from a host of environmental regulations.

Representatives from the industry, as well as all three commissioners from the Texas Railroad Commission, came to provide their perspective along with residents from Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. Residents from the Barnett Shale area came to the meeting to share their stories of contaminated water — from the woman who saw health effects first in her plants and animals, then in her husband, to more publicized cases.

Dish Mayor Calvin Tillman brought a bottle of drinking water from Damon and Amber Smith's well, which was gray and cloudy. He told the panel recording the testimony that the family's water has been tested several times. While not all the tests found the same levels of heavy metals and toxic compounds, at least one found arsenic, chromium and lead above levels considered safe for drinking.

He challenged the EPA to keep its study focused on drinking water.

"Your job is not a positive or negative effect for Chesapeake [Energy] or Devon [Energy]," Tillman said. "Please don't let politics cloud your decision."

Many representatives for the industry and for mineral owners came from Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas to underscore that hydraulic fracturing has been in use for more than 60 years and has safely stimulated more than 1 million wells around the country.

Alex Mills, president of the Texas Alliance of Energy Producers, stated that there had not been one proven case of water contamination from hydraulic fracturing.

Wise County resident Tim Ruggiero told the panel that the claim was carefully crafted, and listed a host of reported contaminations, including his own well water, which he said his family can no longer drink.

The first hour of the four-hour meeting began with remarks from EPA officials about the scope of the study and the ways that the public could participate in the process.

Robert Puls, of the EPA's research office, told the crowd that the agency would select various sites around the country for detailed case studies. The public comments would help them determine which sites to select. The

case studies would help the EPA better understand the effect of the process on water supplies — both quantity and quality — and could lead to new policies and regulations, Puls said.

Many people, including some industry representatives involved in recycling drilling fluids, encouraged the EPA to also consider the quantity of fresh water being used in the process. The process uses between 1 million to 5 million gallons of fresh water per well.

There are about 14,000 wells in the 23 counties of the Barnett Shale area, with more than 3,000 new wells permitted.

Public testimony filled the next three hours, with each person allotted two minutes to talk. Many comments elicited applause, and some elicited “boos,” including the testimony of outgoing Railroad Commissioner Victor Carrillo, who said the Railroad Commission had no documented cases of water contamination due to the process.

Additional meetings will be held in Colorado, New York and Pennsylvania. Ann Codrington, of the EPA’s groundwater and drinking water divisions, told the crowd that those who weren’t able to speak, or didn’t want to speak in public, could send their comments directly to the agency. After the study design has been written, the EPA would again seek public comment on the issue.

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## News

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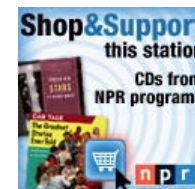
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"I am one of those cases of contaminated drinking water. It's why I'm here tonight," Reggiero told the EPA.

Ruggiero says he tested his water just before and after gas producers began drilling on his property. He says water samples collected after the drilling started contain an unknown chemical similar to the gas additive MTBE. Ruggiero also complains of air contamination and state agencies unwilling to take action.

"It's virtually turned our life upside down. We can no longer just turn on the tap and drink water. We now have to bring in water at additional cost," he said.

Ruggiero says the appraised value of his house has also plummeted from \$250,000 in 2004 to \$78,000 following drilling this year.

The EPA plans to hold similar hearings in Colorado, Pennsylvania and New York. The testimony will help shape a study on hydraulic fracturing that begins this fall. The EPA will have preliminary results on how it affects drinking water by the end of next year.

That timeline clearly frustrated some like Robert Snoke, chairman of the Rosemont Neighborhood Association in Fort Worth. He challenged the EPA saying, "You are going to wait until I see something coming out of my faucet that's purple? Then I'm to call you? Well it's too late if it's in my water."

Those like Snoke want more industry scrutiny now. Industry representatives say they want enforcement following a thorough review based on science.

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# Star-Telegram

## Fort Worth meeting on gas drilling process draws heated response

Posted Thursday, Jul. 08, 2010

BY JACK Z. SMITH

[jzsmith@star-telegram.com](mailto:jzsmith@star-telegram.com)

FORT WORTH -- It wasn't an event for the meek and indecisive, nor for those seeking middle ground.

A capacity crowd of about 600 gathered at the downtown Hilton Fort Worth hotel Thursday night, and dozens of speakers voiced either grave concerns about -- or enthusiastic support for -- the increasingly controversial hydraulic fracturing process that has made possible drilling booms such as the Barnett Shale play in North Texas.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency called the meeting -- the first of four around the nation -- to determine the scope of a study that will focus on the issue of whether the fracturing process poses a significant threat in terms of groundwater contamination. But the study also will examine other issues, including the large volume of water used in "fracking" wells.

"I'm sending out an SOS to the EPA," said fervent fracking critic Sharon Wilson, a local representative of the Texas Oil and Gas Accountability Project, which favors strong federal regulation of the energy industry and full disclosure of chemicals used in fracturing.

"We need you here. We need you on the ground. We need you now," Wilson told EPA officials, as supporters applauded enthusiastically.

But Angie Burckhalter, speaking on behalf of the Oklahoma Independent Petroleum Association and the Independent Petroleum Association of America, also elicited enthusiastic clapping after describing fracking as "a safe, proven technology that has been used over one million times for 60 years."

Fracturing is vital to producing "clean energy that makes modern life possible," she said.

### Boos and cheers

Texas Railroad Commission Chairman Victor Carrillo also strongly defended fracturing, saying that without it, gas recovery from tight rock formations such as the Barnett Shale -- the leading gas-producing area in the nation -- would be "impossible." There are no documented cases of fracturing causing groundwater contamination in Texas, he said, drawing both cheers and boos.

Meeting moderator Adam Saslow repeatedly implored audience members to tone down, urging them to employ "manners your mother taught you."

Calvin Tillman, an outspoken critic of the oil and gas industry and mayor of the Denton County community of Dish, held up a container of murky water and said it came from the home of a resident who fears his water well has been contaminated by Barnett Shale operations.

In considering stronger regulation, the foremost concern should not be about what might "negatively affect Chesapeake or Devon," Tillman said, referring to two large gas producers. Instead, the emphasis should be on negative effects on drinking water, he said.

America's Natural Gas Alliance, which represents 34 independent gas exploration and production companies, defending fracking and pledged to "be a constructive participant in the progress of the [EPA] study going forward."

"We are confident that a scientifically sound and data-driven examination will provide policymakers and the public with even greater reassurance of the safety of the longstanding practice," ANGA said in a statement.

### How it works

Hydraulic fracturing is a technique under which huge volumes of water and sand, along with a much smaller amount of chemicals, are injected deep underground to fracture rock formations and allow gas and oil to flow into a wellbore.

Concerns have been expressed about the potential for fracturing to pollute groundwater; about surface spills of well wastewater that include chemicals used in fracturing; and about the volume of water that fracturing requires -- often 3 million or more gallons for a single well.

**JACK Z. SMITH, 8 17-390-7724**

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Jul 8, 2010 10:18 pm US/Central

## Local Fracking Debate Catches Ear Of EPA

*Melissa Newton*

FORT WORTH (CBS 11 / TXA 21) — Its a concern for many living in the Barnett Shale. The drilling debate drew hundreds of people to a meeting Thursday night in downtown Fort Worth.

The Environmental Protection Agency is discussing a massive new study on the safety of hydraulic fracturing, a process used to extract minerals from the ground.

It's a big concern in the small Denton County town of Dish. "On top of our air quality we've had some water quality issues" said Mayor Calvin Tillman.

George Tillotson said his daughter, Amber Smith, has a contaminated water well. Her well sits 500 feet from a drilling site in Dish.

"Ever since they fracked the well they've had issues... My granddaughter has headaches that they can't explain."

"Just associating dirty water with nearby oilfield activity is not enough to say there is a relationship there" said Richard Varela, Sr. Vice President of TIPRO.

According to industry experts, hydraulic fracturing is not only safe, but necessary in the Barnett Shale.

"Rocks like shale are so tight that if you drill through them they won't give up gas unless you fracture them" Varela said.

To do that, drilling companies use a geled water solution, but some fear what's in that solution is contaminating their water supply.

"There is much evidence that there is damage from hydraulic fracturing" said Faith Chatham of the DFW Regional Concerned Citizens.

"We don't know if it is actually contaminating the water or not" said Candice Brewer, President of the Texas chapter of the National Association of Royalty Owners, "There haven't been scientific studies."

That's exactly what the EPA plans to do. The agency will soon launch a nationwide study on the impact the fracturing process could have on drinking water, human health, and the environment.

"That's going to help longterm but it's not going to help my daughter" Tillotson said, "It's not going to help her at all."

The EPA gathered public input from more than 400 people who signed up to speak, Thursday. The results of the study will not be available until late 2012.

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## Flaming Faucets: Natural Gas In a Bowie Water Well

Posted: Jul 08, 2010 6:05 PM CDT

Updated: Jul 08, 2010 6:21 PM CDT



We're looking into concerns about the water near Bowie, where natural gas is leaking into a family's well water. Both the Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Railroad Commission are investigating. The leak is so big, one family can actually set their faucet on fire.

For about three months, Stephen Brock has been hearing a gurgling sound in his water faucets -- the kind you'd hear if you have air in your pipes. But just this week, he saw a documentary about a man in a similar situation.

"He lit it on fire. I was like, 'Woah! I wonder if mine...I'm gonna try that," Brock said.

So he pulled out a lighter and turned on the tap in the kitchen.

"There was so much gas in there when I lit it, just big old blue orange flame came up. I jumped back, shut it off," he said.

He immediately called the Texas Railroad Commission. They came to the property and tested the water from the private well. Now the EPA is getting involved to see if gas from a nearby oil well was leaking into the groundwater.

"They told me not to use the water, don't take baths in it. I was like, 'So, I have to drive into town to my mother-in-law's house to take showers now,'" Brock said.

Some of his neighbors have had various problems with things seeping into their water wells over the years, but they feel threatened by oil well owners. Brock wants everyone to get the word out.

"Your family's health and your health is a lot more important than working for an oil company that wants to destroy your environment and your family's health," he said.

Brock says he's sure the gas is seeping into his well from an oil well.

"I feel like I'm sitting' on a bomb with gas in my lines. 'Cause if I get a good enough gas pocket there in that water heater, it can ignite and blow half my house up. It's scary," he said.

Brock contacted the railroad commission two years ago about salty water. The commission found a nearby saltwater injection well as the likely cause. Jack Grace production company owns a saltwater injection well and an oil well near the Brocks' home, both of which they plugged over a year ago. An employee tells us it's not impossible that one of their wells is contributing to the flaming faucets, but if it is determined to be their responsibility, they will immediately take care of it.

Workers from both the Railroad Commission and the EPA will be at Brock's home tomorrow to try to determine if the gas is methane or something else. They'll also need to speak with neighbors to see if they have the same problems in their water lines. We'll continue to follow this story as it develops.

*Spencer Blake, Newschannel 6.*

# Bloomberg

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## Texas Regulator Offers Proposal on Refinery Permits After EPA Challenge

By Katarzyna Klimasinska - Jul 8, 2010

Texas's environmental regulator, which oversees more than one-fourth of U.S. [refining](#) capacity, proposed changes to air permits targeted by the Environmental Protection Agency for failing to comply with federal law.

The plan would allow refiners and chemicals producers to voluntarily seek state permits setting emissions limits on specific processing units, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality said today. The U.S. EPA said earlier this year that permits for operations owned by such companies as Chevron Corp., [Valero Energy Corp.](#) and BP Plc didn't comply with the Clean Air Act because pollution limits were only for whole plants.

The state proposal is "the way to resolve the dispute," said [Patricia Finn Braddock](#), a partner at law firm Fulbright & Jaworski LLP in Austin, Texas, which represents owners of some of the 122 plants with permits challenged by the EPA. Texas Governor [Rick Perry](#) sent a letter to President [Barack Obama](#) in May saying the EPA's actions were "unwarranted" and would "kill good American jobs."

Matthew Tejada, executive director at [Air Alliance Houston](#), said the Texas proposals isn't "anything of great significance" because companies probably won't voluntarily forgo their current state permits. Tejada's group, formed in April, seeks to reduce air pollution in the Houston area.

The EPA is reviewing the Texas commission's proposal, said [Dave Bary](#), spokesman for the federal agency.

To contact the reporter on this story: [Katarzyna Klimasinska](#) in Houston at [kklimasinska@bloomberg.net](mailto:kklimasinska@bloomberg.net).

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## Proposed plant loses ruling

### 2 judges fault coal project, but environmental groups still wary

By **MATTHEW TRESAUGUE** Copyright 2010 Houston Chronicle

July 7, 2010, 10:27PM

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Two Texas administrative law judges have sided with environmentalists against a permit for a new coal- and petroleum coke-fired power plant in Matagorda County.

The judges found that Houston-based White Stallion Energy Center's plans for a 1,200-megawatt plant failed on three points, including the quality of the data used to make conclusions about air quality in the area.

Environmentalists who oppose the White Stallion plant said the judges' ruling did not go as far as they would like, but it possibly delayed the project by as much as six months.

"This is a pollution bullet dodged for a moment," said Tom "Smitty" Smith, Texas director of Public Citizen, one of the groups fighting the new plant.

Administrative Law Judges Paul Keeper and Kerrie Jo Qualthorough issued their decision this week based on testimony and evidence at

a hearing in April.

The judges' findings are not binding on the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, which makes the final decision on air permits. The commissioners have not yet scheduled a vote on the White Stallion permit, a TCEQ spokesman said. In June, the commissioners gave the developers of a petroleum-coke plant in Corpus Christi four months to fix problems in their application, despite a blistering ruling from two administrative law judges and pleas from environmentalists and residents to require the company to start over.

In the White Stallion case, the judges found fault with the data the company used to make conclusions on air quality in the region. They also concluded that the company failed to consider the effects of coal dust and to set proper limits for two air pollutants.

White Stallion officials did not respond to requests for comment.

The judges denied the environmentalists' request to reject the application based on the potential effect on Houston's air quality.

Some Houston lawmakers and environmentalists have said the new plant would worsen the region's stubborn smog problem as tougher nationwide limits for the widespread pollutant come into play.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also wants Texas regulators to delay permits until they can prove that pollution from the coal plant would not worsen Houston's smog.

The new plant would pump more than 4,000 tons of nitrogen oxides into the air each year — as much as 4.8 million cars - and increase Houston's ozone level by 2 parts per billion, according to environmental groups.

"There is no doubt that White Stallion will have a lot of NOx emissions," said Neil Carman, an air quality expert for the Sierra Club's Lone Star chapter. "It's just a matter of which way the wind blows."

The plant would be built less than 20 miles from the boundary of the eight-county Houston region that was long in violation of federal limits for smog, or ozone. Rules on industrial pollution - in particular, new sources - are tighter inside such areas than outside, even though smog isn't bound by county lines.

Houston, once the nation's smog capital, met the federal smog limit for the first time last year. Ozone is created when a mixture of chemicals emitted mostly by vehicles, refineries and industrial plants reacts with sunlight.

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## Daily Environment Report<sup>TM</sup>

Source: Daily Environment Report: News Archive > 2010 > July > 07/09/2010 > News > Oil Spills: BP to Supply More Detail on New Well Cap, Does Not Yet Have Green Light to Try It

130 DEN A-10

### ***Oil Spills***

#### **BP to Supply More Detail on New Well Cap, Does Not Yet Have Green Light to Try It**

BP Plc must await a decision from federal officials on whether to try to put a new cap on the leaking Macondo oil well in the Gulf of Mexico, and no decision has been made yet, a company spokesman said July 8.

Earlier in the day, Thad Allen, the recently retired Coast Guard admiral in charge of the federal response to the oil spill, sent a letter to Bob Dudley, chief managing director of BP Group, giving Dudley 24 hours to provide a detailed timeline on the "decision points" for the plan for a new cap.

Federal officials will have final say in the timing if the decision is made to go ahead with the new cap, the BP spokesman said.

Allen also required BP to provide a contingency plan should the mounting of the new cap fail, a plan for pressure testing the well and possibly shutting in the well using the new cap, and a timeline for an estimated completion of the relief wells.

Remarks by Dudley during the week had suggested the first relief well might be ready a few weeks ahead of the mid-August estimated time, but neither BP nor the Coast Guard is dropping the mid-August time frame from their planning.

#### **Wary of Risks in New Cap**

In his July 8 letter to Dudley, Allen noted that a decision to bolt a new cap in place would not be without risk.

"If the current top hat containment system is replaced with the capping stack, there will be a period of decreased oil capture from the wellhead while this operation is carried out," Allen wrote. "To approve these potential actions, I must have knowledge of the steps and decision points involved; mitigation efforts to be implemented; and contingency plans if these efforts are not successful."

Allen also required BP to provide a plan for maximizing management of oil reaching the surface in light of the prospect for attaching the new cap.

Currently, about 16,000 barrels a day of oil are drawn by pipe to the Discoverer Enterprise, which can offload its oil to tankers. About 8,000 barrels a day are fed by another pipe to the Q4000, which flares the oil it collects. The new cap would channel oil to another ship, the Helix Producer, and would boost total capacity for oil capture to about 53,000 barrels a day.

The well is estimated to be releasing between 35,000 and 60,000 barrels a day (114 DEN A-12, 6/16/10).

The spill began April 20 with an explosion on the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig that killed 11 workers.

*By Alan Kovski*

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*More information on the federal response to the BP oil spill is available at  
<http://www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com/go/site/2931>.*

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July 8, 2010

# Court Rejects Moratorium on Drilling in the Gulf

By **JOHN M. BRODER**

WASHINGTON — A federal appeals court on Thursday turned down the Obama administration's effort to enforce a six-month moratorium on deepwater drilling in the Gulf of Mexico.

A three-judge panel of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, in New Orleans, ruled shortly after a hearing in a lawsuit filed by companies that claim they are being financially crippled by the suspension of drilling.

The [Interior Department](#) said the moratorium was necessary because of the uncertainties about the cause of the [BP oil](#) well blowout in April, a shortage of response equipment and a need to write strict new drilling rules. The moratorium was struck down by a lower court on June 22 by a federal judge who found it arbitrary and economically ruinous to industry.

The appeals court found that the Interior Department failed to show the federal government would suffer "irreparable injury" if the moratorium is lifted while it appeals the trial court's decision.

A senior administration official said earlier Thursday that the Interior Department would immediately issue a new moratorium if it lost the court case. Those new regulations, revising the earlier suspension, could come as early as Friday.

In the afternoon hearing, industry lawyers urged the court to uphold the lower court ruling striking down the moratorium. "People are being put out of jobs," said Carl D. Rosenblum, a lawyer representing [Hornbeck Offshore Services](#), a Louisiana firm that provides goods and services to [offshore drilling](#) and pumping platforms. "Rigs are leaving the gulf, and going to

foreign waters.”

Government lawyers responded that the suspension of drilling was justified. Michael T. Gray, a Justice Department lawyer representing the administration, said Congress gave the Interior Department the authority to take such actions to protect the environment and worker safety.

Hornbeck and a dozen other oil industry companies brought the suit last month, claiming their livelihoods were threatened by the federal drilling ban. They were supported by Gov. [Bobby Jindal](#) of Louisiana and other local officials around the Gulf Coast.

Mr. Jindal said outside the courtroom on Thursday that the oil spill had already ruined Louisiana’s seafood industry and dampened tourism throughout the region. The drilling ban, he said, is costing thousands of Louisianans their jobs.

Judge Martin L. C. Feldman of United States District Court in New Orleans agreed with the oil industry in a ruling handed down on June 22, saying that the federal moratorium was overly broad. He said the suspension of drilling was punitive to companies with good safety records and not supported by fact or history.

The administration’s order halted 33 exploratory drilling projects and suspended new permits, but did not affect more than 3,000 platforms already in production.

Alliance for Justice, a liberal advocacy group, reported on Thursday that two of the judges on the appeals court panel, Jerry E. Smith and W. Eugene Davis, both appointed by President [Ronald Reagan](#), had represented the oil and gas industries while in private practice. Judge Smith’s clients included [Exxon Mobil](#), [ConocoPhillips](#) and [Sunoco](#). Judge Davis represented a number of companies involved in offshore drilling and other oil field operations.

Judge Davis’s 2008 financial disclosure reports listed \$2,000 to \$30,000 in investments in gas and oil concerns; Judge Smith had none.

The third judge on the panel, James L. Dennis, appointed by President [Bill Clinton](#), had investments in at least 18 energy companies valued at between \$31,000 and \$300,000, the group found. Judge Dennis sold a stake in [Transocean](#), the company that was drilling the well under contract to BP, in 2006, according to financial disclosure reports compiled by the group.

*David Winkler-Schmit contributed reporting from New Orleans.*



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## **EPA: Moderate health concerns with Gulf air**

Posted: Thursday, July 8, 2010 8:07 pm | Updated: 11:33 pm, Thu Jul 8, 2010.

By CAIN BURDEAU |

The Environmental Protection Agency says the air in some places along the Louisiana coast poses a health risk to vulnerable people.

The EPA says recent air sampling shows a moderate health risk in Venice and Grand Isle, two Louisiana towns about 50 miles from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill site.

The agency says anyone unusually sensitive to low-quality air should avoid "prolonged or heavy exertion."

EPA's warning comes as concerns grow that the Gulf oil spill may be fouling not just the water and shores but also the air.

The agency says the levels of chemicals found in air samples have not been linked directly to the BP spill. But odor-causing pollutants associated with oil have been detected.

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Online:

EPA response on BP spill air quality: <http://www.epa.gov/bpspill/air.html>

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## Transferring oil from broken well an option for BP

By JAY REEVES and TOM BREEN (AP) — 4 hours ago

THEODORE, Ala. — The first of two relief wells being drilled to stop the Gulf oil gusher could be done by the end of the month, BP officials say, but if that doesn't succeed, one backup being considered is transferring the crude to non-producing underwater wells that are miles away.

BP would run the flow through pipelines across the floor of the Gulf of Mexico, said retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, the Obama administration's point man on the crisis.

"That would take some construction and some time. It would probably move us into the late August timeframe," Allen said.

Still, the best hope to stop the spewing oil from the blown-out well a mile under the sea is the relief wells. Though officials said the first could be finished by the end of July, weeks ahead of schedule, they are quick to point out that such an optimistic timetable would require ideal conditions every step of the way.

That is something that has rarely happened since the leak began more than 2 1/2 months ago with the deadly explosion of the rig Deepwater Horizon 50 miles off the Louisiana coast.

"BP's credibility is basically shot," said Jefferson Parish Council Chairman John Young. "I hope they plug it as soon as they can, but I'm not holding my breath. They're unreliable and they haven't been transparent or open."

In New Orleans, a federal appeals court Thursday rejected the government's effort to restore an offshore deepwater drilling moratorium, opening the door to resumed drilling in the Gulf while the legal fight continues.

The ruling is not the final word on the Obama administration's fight to suspend new drilling projects so it can study the risks revealed by the disastrous BP oil spill. The same appeals court is expected to hear arguments on the merits of the moratorium case in late August or early September.

In the meantime, Allen said crews expect to intercept and penetrate the pipe from the Deepwater Horizon about 18,000 feet below sea level in seven to 10 days. The drilling crew is attempting to hit a target the size of a dinner plate at a depth where water pressure is great enough to crush a submarine.

But crews will not know how long it will take to stop the oil until they get there. Because the gushing well essentially is composed of pipes within pipes, oil could be coming up through multiple layers, Allen said.

The plan is to inject heavy mud and cement into each layer of the pipe, if needed, to overcome the pressure of the huge oil reservoir below.

Several times in the past week, BP Managing Director Robert Dudley has said drilling for a relief well is making fast progress and could be done before August.

But he's quickly made a caveat: Everything would have to go flawlessly, something he considers unlikely especially during hurricane season. Though a series of storms in the Gulf have not disrupted drilling, it has curtailed skimming and other cleanup and containment efforts.

"In a perfect world with no interruptions, it's possible to be ready to stop the well between July 20 and July 27," Dudley told The Wall Street Journal. He made similar remarks to the Houston Chronicle in a story published July 2.

Allen has confirmed that the operation is ahead of schedule, but he won't budge from the expected August completion date.

"There are certain things that can move that date up, but my official position is the middle of August," Allen said Thursday.

If for some reason the drilling doesn't succeed, another plan is to divert the oil.

Donald Van Nieuwenhuise, a University of Houston geology professor who has worked as a lead geologist on several offshore drilling projects, said the transfer to wells two to 10 miles away would take time but would avoid the need for surface vessels and possible interruptions from storms.

"It's easy," he said. "It's just not quick. You have to put more equipment on the (sea)floor."

But the idea outlined by Allen apparently calls for storing the oil with gas and water from the gushing well in a different well so it could possibly be separated and removed at a later date, according to Van Nieuwenhuise.

"Producing the oil now is not something they need to be worried about while they're trying to get oil out of the Gulf," he said.

For the region, the bottom line remains the same: An estimated 68 million to 169 million gallons

**AP** Associated Press

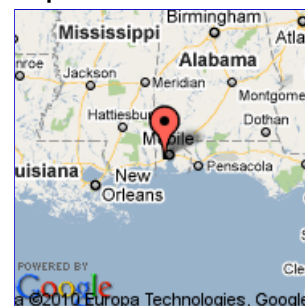
Photo 1 of 5



A Vinca flower floats in a brown, oily sludge in a canal behind a home just off Lake Pontchartrain near Slidell, La., Thursday, July 8, 2010. (AP Photo/Chuck Cook)



Map



of crude have gushed into the Gulf since the April 20 blast that killed 11 workers. And a few days' difference matters less than the prospect of stopping the leak for good.

Weather is another factor. A major tropical storm or hurricane nearby would shut drilling down.

Also, as the drill gets closer to the well pipe, the work becomes more delicate, and any mistake becomes nearly catastrophic. That's why Allen and BP are sticking to August as the target.

"If it happens sooner than that, I think we can all jump for joy," he told reporters.

*Breen reported from New Orleans. Associated Press writers Vicki Smith, Greg Giuffrida and Michael Kunzelman in New Orleans, and AP Energy Writer Chris Kahn in New York also contributed to this report.*

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Jul 08, 2010

## BP: Gulf oil spill could be stopped this month

09:19 AM

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BP is moving to fix its gushing Gulf oil well by July 27, weeks ahead of the deadline the energy giant is discussing publicly, the [Wall Street Journal](#) reports.

"In a perfect world with no interruptions, it's possible to be ready to stop the well between July 20 and July 27," BP managing director Bob Dudley told the *Journal*. Dudley added that stopping the well in July is threatened by hurricane season and is "unlikely."



CAPTION

By Dave Martin, AP

National Incident Commander and retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen said Thursday in Alabama that a relief well being drilled to contain the spill could be completed ahead of schedule, the Associated Press reports.

Crews are expected to reach the existing well and drill into its outer casing in seven to 10 days, Allen told the AP. If the oil is coming up through all the different rings of the well, it will likely take until mid-August. If it's coming up the well's center pipe, it could be sooner, the AP story says.

BP is also readying backup plans in case its current plan fails, including connecting a well to existing pipelines to two underwater gas and oil fields, according to company officials, the *Journal* reports.

- MAP: [Environmental impacts](#) of the oil spill
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BP spokesman Andrew Gowers said Thursday that the company hasn't changed its target date of an August completion of the well-killing operation, the *Washington Post* reports.

"It is true that we are proceeding on exactly the same schedule as before, which means that it is most likely to happen in the first half of August," Gowers told the *Post*. "You will note Bob Dudley's comment to the *Journal* that it is theoretically possible but unlikely that it could happen a bit sooner."

BP spokesman Scott Dean told the AP that late July is an ideal completion time, but a major storm could cause delays.

Meanwhile, out in the Gulf of Mexico, choppy seas held up oil skimming operations along the coast. Better weather is forecast for the weekend.

Another tropical depression formed in the Gulf of Mexico Wednesday and was closely following the path of Hurricane Alex to the coast at the border of Texas and Mexico, the AP reports. It was expected to have little effect on the eastern Gulf.

Between 86 million and 168 million gallons of oil have spewed into the Gulf since the Deepwater Horizon rig exploded on April 20, killing 11 workers. Oil has appeared on the shores of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida and Texas.

(Posted by Jessica Durando)

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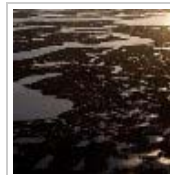
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## BP dampens hope of early leak fix

By **Eric Walsh**

WASHINGTON | Thu Jul 8, 2010 8:08am EDT

(Reuters) - BP dampened hopes that it could plug its leaking [Gulf of Mexico](#) well sooner than forecast on Thursday, while a battle between the U.S. government and the oil industry over a deepwater drilling ban heads to court.

BP stuck to its August target to complete a relief well to halt the worst oil spill in U.S. history, after a press report raised hopes the company could stem the 80-day-old leak sooner.

The head of BP's Gulf Coast restoration unit, Bob Dudley, told the Wall Street Journal that it could be possible to stop the well between July 20 and July 27 "in a perfect world with no interruptions."

"He (Dudley) gave that as the very, very best scenario if everything went absolutely superbly according to plan and there are no interruptions but the expectation is that it will be August," a spokeswoman said.



Bankers say BP's chief executive Tony Hayward is currently on an international marketing drive for its stock, whose price has fallen by around half since the Macondo subsea well blew out in April, spewing crude oil into the [Gulf of Mexico](#) and soiling the shores of every U.S. Gulf Coast state.

The shares were up 0.8 percent at 365 pence by 1020 GMT (6:20 a.m. EDT) on Thursday, when the Stoxx 600 European oil and gas sector index was up 0.85 percent.

Singapore state investor Temasek Holdings on Thursday dismissed talk it had held discussions with BP for a strategic stake. "It's speculation," Temasek Executive Director Simon Israel told reporters when asked if Temasek was talking to BP.

Temasek's comment comes after Hayward met an Abu Dhabi state investment fund on Wednesday.

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Also on Thursday, the oil drilling industry was set to confront the Obama administration in court over the White House's effort to suspend deepwater oil drilling in the [Gulf of Mexico](#) for six months.

Given the business and environmental stakes, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in New Orleans is expected to rule quickly, after a rare one-hour oral argument, on whether deepwater drilling should be temporarily halted again.

A federal judge, also in New Orleans, lifted the moratorium last month after Hornbeck Offshore Services Inc argued it was arbitrary because it was a blanket ban on all new drilling in depths below 500 feet.

The Obama administration appealed, saying the suspension was needed to give time to investigate the cause of the BP blowout and ensure other drilling rigs operate safely.

It is seeking a stay of the judge's ruling at the hearing, scheduled for 3 p.m. local time (2000 GMT) on Thursday.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration said the ban would reduce crude output by an average of 82,000 barrels a day, more than previously estimated.

A successful court challenge "could give some of these (drillers') stocks a lift in the near term," said Channing Smith, co-portfolio manager of Tulsa, Oklahoma-based Capital Advisors Growth Fund.

The European Union's energy chief said on Wednesday the bloc should consider its own moratorium on new deepwater oil drilling until after a probe into the BP spill.

#### POLITICAL CHALLENGE

Meanwhile the oil from the Macondo well is wreaking havoc on coastal ecosystems, killing birds, sea turtles and dolphins and risking multibillion-dollar fishing and tourist industries at a time of high unemployment.

Estimates of the leak's severity vary widely, to as high as 100,000 barrels per day. A new collection vessel that should more than double BP's oil-capture capacity to 53,000 barrels a day from around 25,000 is projected to take three more days to hook up, as rough seas hamper efforts to finish the job.

With the region now a month into the six-month hurricane season, U.S. forecasters reported late on Wednesday that a tropical depression had formed over the southern Gulf and was set to slam into the Gulf Coast near the Texas-Mexico border on Thursday.

Another serious storm in the [Gulf of Mexico](#) could further disrupt efforts to contain the massive oil spill.

The region is still recovering from Hurricane Alex, the first named cyclone of the season, which battered northern [Mexico](#) last week, dumping heavy rains and flooding the Mexican city of Monterrey, killing 12 people.

Alex, a Category 2 storm when it hit, shuttered some oil and gas production in the [Gulf of Mexico](#) as a precaution and delayed efforts to capture oil gushing from the damaged well.

Pushed by the Obama administration, BP has committed to a \$20 billion fund for clean-up and other costs stemming from the spill. Its costs to date have topped \$3 billion.

(Additional reporting by [Jeremy Pelofsky](#) in Washington, [Martinne Geller](#) in New York, Kristen Hays in Houston, [Rodrigo Campos](#) in New York, [Pete Harrison](#) in Brussels, [Yereth Rosen](#) in Anchorage, Stanley Carvalho in Abu Dhabi and Shaheen Pasha in Dubai; Sakthi Prasad in Bangalore; Writing by Eric Walsh and Erica Billingham; Editing by [Jeremy Laurence](#), Greg Mahlich)

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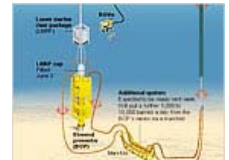
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## Issuing of new drill ban over BP depends on case

12:13pm EDT

By [Tom Doggett](#) and [Jeremy Pelofsky](#)

WASHINGTON/NEW ORLEANS (Reuters) - The Obama administration said on Thursday it will immediately issue a revised ban on deepwater drilling if an appeals court does not allow it to reinstate the six-month moratorium it imposed in the wake of the BP oil spill.

However, it will not impose a new drilling ban if the federal court in New Orleans supports its initial moratorium, an Interior Department official told Reuters.

A hearing before a three-judge appeals panel is scheduled for 3 p.m. CDT/4 p.m. EDT (2000 GMT) on Thursday on the ban imposed during the investigation of what caused the April 20 drilling rig explosion that killed 11 men and triggered the worst oil spill in U.S. history.

A federal judge stopped the ban last month, ruling in favor of drillers like Hornbeck Offshore Services Inc, who argued the moratorium was too broad, would cost jobs and unfairly punished their industry.

Department of Justice lawyers will argue the ban is sufficiently narrow and necessary to avoid another disastrous spill such as the one that has leaked oil into the Gulf of Mexico for 80 days.

Depending on how the three-judge panel rules, legal experts said the losing side could appeal to the full appeals court and the case ultimately could be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Ahead of the hearing, BP's New York share price on Thursday was up fractionally after rising about 24 percent in the past eight trading days on talk company executives were seeking new investors and optimism the worst might be behind the company.

BP sought to stanch some of that optimism on Thursday after a report it could stop the well by July 27, when it is due to report its second quarter income. The target for completing a relief well to stop the flow had been mid-August.

The company said it could stop the well by July 27 only under perfect conditions.

(Additional reporting by [Matthew Bigg](#) in Mississippi, [Martinne Geller](#) in New York, [Rodrigo Campos](#) in New York and [Kristen Hays](#) in Houston; Writing by [Patricia Zengerle](#); Editing by [Kristin Roberts](#) and [Jerry Norton](#))



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## U.S. drilling moratorium to take bigger output bite

3:25am EDT

By [Tom Doggett](#) and [Timothy Gardner](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Obama administration's contested moratorium on deepwater drilling will take a larger portion out of U.S. oil production next year than previously thought, the government's energy forecasting agency said on Wednesday.

Oil production next year is expected to be cut by 82,000 barrels per day, or almost 30 million barrels total, due to delayed or canceled drilling caused by the moratorium, the Energy Information Administration said. That is 17 percent more from the 70,000 bpd in lost output the agency predicted just last month.

Monthly production losses could reach nearly 100,000 bpd by December 2011, the EIA said.

In response to the BP oil spill, the administration imposed a six-month moratorium on exploratory and development drilling in waters more than 500 feet deep. A federal judge lifted the ban last month, but administration lawyers will go to an appeals court on Thursday to argue it be reinstated.

The administration is also working on a new moratorium that could allow drilling in certain subsea fields. But it is uncertain when this will be announced.

Because of the legal uncertainties, analysts said oil exploration will be hampered for months to come.

As a result, the moratorium will end a recent pattern of yearly increases in U.S. oil production, as according to EIA data total output from both onshore and offshore next year will fall by 26,000 bpd to 5.37 million bpd.

The American Petroleum Institute, which lobbies on behalf of oil and gas companies is fighting a blanket moratorium.

It has recommended to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar that as long as oil companies meet the department's new safety regulations for shallow water drilling then companies should also be allowed to drill in deep waters.

The safety rules for exploratory and development wells, which were issued last month, require companies to certify they have working blowout preventers to avoid oil spills, they will conduct at least two tests of cement barriers in underwater wells and that they will follow new casing installation procedures.

"The government has imposed significant new requirements. If companies demonstrate compliance with these new requirements, then they should be permitted to begin operations across the board and maintain the thousands of job that are at stake," said Erik Milito, who oversees drilling issues for API.

(Additional reporting by [Ayesha Rascoe](#); Editing by Sofina Mirza-Reid)

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Cleaning Up on the Oil Spill

## Is a Deepwater Drilling Moratorium Smart?

Posted by **BRYAN WALSH** Thursday, July 8, 2010 at 10:45 am

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Government lawyers will be in a federal appeals court in New Orleans today, fighting to reinstate a six-month moratorium on deepwater drilling. The temporary ban—put in place by President Obama after the BP spill to give a presidential commission time to reevaluate the safety of deepwater drilling—was **overturned last month** by a federal judge on the grounds that the government hadn't proved that the economic damage inflicted on the drilling industry by a moratorium was worth the potential safety problems of continued exploration. Administration lawyers will try their luck before a three-judge this afternoon at the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals.

The White House—and most environmental groups—responded with outrage after Judge Martin Feldman blocked the drilling moratorium on June 22. They pointed out—rightly, I think—that the clear inability of BP to handle a partially blown underwater well demonstrated that the industry wasn't able to safely manage the risks of deepwater drilling. As Exxon CEO Rex Tillerson said at a Congressional hearing last month, well blowouts are something the industry **"is not well equipped to handle."** That didn't matter to Feldman, who dismissed the government's case in a critical 22-page ruling that among other points cited the now familiar case of an airplane crash—after all, Feldman argued, we don't shut down the entire airline industry after one crash? (How much Feldman, an appointee of President Ronald Reagan, might have been influenced by the fact that he had **extensive oil and gas investments** is unclear—although just about everyone in Louisiana has connections to the oil and gas industry, unless they're a **vampire or something**.)

Even though a moratorium will economically hurt the Gulf region—and there's a risk that deepwater rigs will move to other parts of the world, at least temporarily—I think a timeout makes sense, especially since just about every day we learn how **reckless the industry** can be and how **incompetent federal oversight** has been. With deepwater drilling, the technology to explore seems to have outpaced safety—a pause could give regulators time to catch up. Some green groups, like Oceana, are even **calling for a ban** on all new deepwater drilling—basically a permanent moratorium. The emotional case is powerful—we've seen the destruction of the Deepwater Horizon disaster, which has caused untold damage to the ecology of the Gulf coast and will surely cost tens of billions of dollars before the reckoning is over.

But Lisa Margonelli—director of the energy policy initiative at the New America Foundation and the author of ***Oil on the Brain***—has a pretty strong counter argument. She notes that for all the attention that the BP oil spill has rightly placed on drilling in U.S. waters, we import most of our oil—**61% in May**, the month after the accident—and much of that crude comes from countries with far poorer environmental records than we have. We imported **623,000 barrels of oil** a day from Nigeria last year—yet as Margonelli shows, that country has suffered spills equivalent to the nearly 11 million gallons lost by the Exxon Valdez every year since 1969. (The chronically unstable Niger Delta has some 2,000 active spills right now.) Oil is a dangerous business nearly everywhere—more than 200 people were killed on Monday when a **tanker exploded in the Congo**—but it tends to be even worse outside the U.S.

Margonelli isn't saying that we should just turn a blind eye to the oil industry and let them

do whatever they want. But as satisfying as it might be to boycott BP service stations and turn the wrath of God—or maybe just **Facebook**—on the oil industry, it won't mean a thing globally unless we attack the final cause: oil dependency. Here's how Margonelli puts it:

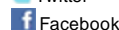
The Deepwater Horizon spill illustrates that every gallon of gas is a gallon of risks — risks of spills in production and transport, of worker deaths, of asthma-inducing air pollution and of climate change, to name a few. We should print these risks on every gasoline receipt, just as we label smoking's risks on cigarette packs. And we should throw our newfound political will behind a sweeping commitment to use less gas — build cars that use less oil (or none at all) and figure out better ways to transport Americans.:

I covered much the same territory in a **cover story for TIME** shortly after the accident. I still think a temporary moratorium is absolutely necessary, and I'll be watching the appeals court in New Orleans this afternoon. (Margonelli also thinks offshore drilling regulation needs an overhaul—check out some of her **recommendations here**.) But for all the sound and fury in Congress, the courts and the media over the BP spill, if we can't impact oil demand, all this will be for nothing.

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## BP plans better outreach to boat owners

By Bart Jansen, Gannett Washington Bureau

PENSACOLA, Fla. — BP is working to hire more local boat owners to help contain the [Gulf of Mexico](#) oil spill after complaints the company hasn't gotten enough private vessels involved.

Since April 30, BP has contracted with 8,500 boats from Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana to respond to the spill. The contracts are modeled after the oil company's Vessels of Opportunity program for private boats that pitch in during a disaster.

About 3,000 boats are laying boom, skimming crude and transporting animals for the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#).

"It's about getting the right vessels onto the water to attack the oil," said Judith Luberski, a BP vice president overseeing the program.

**TAR BALLS IN TEXAS:** [Oil hits all 5 Gulf states](#)

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The company also plans to improve air surveillance through [Tyndall Air Force Base](#) so boats don't get confused about where they should be skimming.

With about one-third of the Gulf closed to fishing, commercial fishers are desperate for work. Many of those fishers had complained BP initially overlooked them in searching for private cleanup help.

After inexperienced boat owners responded in droves to BP's calls for cleanup assistance, the company hired Paul Redman, a Pensacola charter-boat captain, to make sure they had the proper documentation.

Redman said more than 70 boat owners around Pensacola obtained 60-day contracts after requests for help spread at fish houses and marinas.

"Once people found out there was a cash cow in town, there was a major influx of people who had no business being there in the first place," said Redman, who heads associations for reef fishermen and charter captains. "There's going to be some fairness in the program. There has to be."

**FULL COVERAGE:** [The latest on the oil spill](#)

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BP official Larry Thomas said the changes BP is making in the private-vessel contracting program were well-received at a meeting he attended Wednesday with boat owners in Houma, La. "A lot of the changes have been based on input from the fishermen and the community," Thomas said.

Payments under the program vary, based on type of vessel and equipment. For example, vessels shorter than 30 feet get \$1,200 for a 24-hour period, while those longer than 65 feet get \$3,000. Crewmembers get \$200 per eight-hour day for responding to the spill or receiving training.

Redman said that on some days, he earns more than he would have fishing, and some days, he makes less. But the payments are fair, he said.

"It's been good and getting better," Redman said. "Unfortunately, our fisheries are at stake — but they're doing what they can for us."

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## NEWS

### BP to lease Lamar-Dixon for storage

By **DAVID J. MITCHELL**

*Advocate River parishes bureau*

Published: Jul 8, 2010

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GONZALES — Ascension Parish government signed a \$315,000, three-month lease allowing BP to use an eight-acre area in one of Lamar-Dixon Expo Center's parking lots for equipment storage in case of a hurricane, officials said Wednesday.

The parish and BP signed the deal Tuesday in Parish President Tommy Martinez's office, said Rick Webre, director of the parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.

Martinez said BP is also interested in using a building and outside barns at the 247-acre facility near Gonzales and Interstate 10.

"We will negotiate with them on that. They have indicated a very strong interest in that," Martinez said in a telephone interview.

The current agreement comes as Hurricane Alex hindered cleanup and oil capture activities last week offshore and Louisiana and in the state's coastal waters, though the storm made landfall in northern Mexico.

BP has an option to extend the Lamar-Dixon lease on a month-to-month basis. Hurricane season ends Nov. 30.

A BP spokesman in Houston referred calls Wednesday to the Deepwater Horizon Response Joint Information Center in Houma.

Charles Gaiennie, joint center spokesman, said he could not say what prompted the agreement but suggested it was likely part of contingency planning being implemented.

Parish officials have been trying to change the center's mix of uses to achieve a more self-sufficient operation for the sprawling facility. The center has suffered annual operating losses since the parish leased it from the former owner.

The parish agreed to buy the expo center last fall for \$7.5 million and took over management from a private company the parish hired in 2005 to operate the center while it was under lease to the parish.

BP has spent nearly three months trying to halt oil gushing from its shattered Macondo well in the Gulf of Mexico since the Deepwater Horizon rig exploded April 20.

Webre said BP will be able to store between 500 and 700

trailers on 350,000 square feet of space inside the facility's east parking lot.

He said that the trailers would hold generators, oil boom and other equipment. Gaiennie said BP could also store skimmers and small marine vessels.

Lamar-Dixon has served in hurricane response and recovery activities during the past five years, including for hurricanes Katrina in 2005 and Gustav in 2008.

Webre said that under the new agreement, BP can move in equipment at any time, but added that company officials likely would not start doing so until 120 hours ahead of storm landfall.

He said BP has agreed to pay the lease whether or not it stores the equipment. Under the agreement, BP will pay additional parking, security, forklift and cleanup fees.

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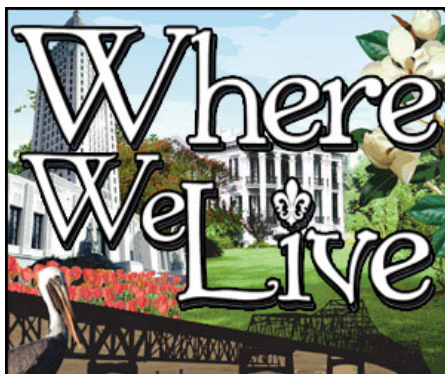
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Thursday, Jul. 08, 2010

## Cleaning Up on the Oil Spill: Who's Making Money?

By Stephen Gandel

The following is an abridged version of an article that appears in the July 19, 2010 print and iPad editions of TIME magazine.

In mid-May, Mark Miller set up shop in a vacant Kia auto dealership in Pascagoula, Miss. — an oceanfront city near the middle of the U.S. Gulf Coast. Unlike the previous tenant, though, he's not selling cars. He's in town to cash in on what has recently become — and will probably be for a while — the area's biggest industry: oil-spill cleanup. Miller has been in the environmental-remediation business for 39 years, and 2010 will likely be his best. "It's a huge event," he says of the Deepwater Horizon spill. "I'm very happy with the work I have."

Miller Environmental Group, based in New York, has hired nearly 1,500 workers in the past month. The company has a fleet of vessels that suck up oil in shallow waters. It has crews in Florida and Mississippi cleaning up beaches and marshes. And like everyone else working the spill, Miller's company has laid boom — miles and miles of the floating orange lines that are supposed to contain oil once it rises to the surface. ([See pictures of the Gulf oil spill.](#))

The Gulf spill is a windfall for the dozens of companies that can provide ships, crews, equipment and expertise. Clean Harbors of Norwell, Mass., one of Miller's larger competitors, is expected to generate \$300 million in sales from the Gulf spill in the next year alone. Waste Management of Houston has been hired by BP to cart away and landfill contaminated sand and other oily waste. Nalco of Naperville, Ill., estimates it will sell \$40 million worth of the dispersant Corexit, which BP has used heavily to break up oil in the water — up from about \$2 million in typical annual sales.

The company set to get the biggest piece of that pie is a little-known firm set up in part by BP. In 1990, after the 11 million gal. (42 million L) *Exxon Valdez* disaster, the federal government put in place regulations mandating that all oil and oil-shipping companies have spill-response plans and teams of workers on staff or on retainer ready to clean a spill. Instead of staffing up or hiring other firms to do the work, the giant oil companies formed their own response unit, Marine Spill Response Corp. (MSRC), to satisfy the new regulations. In the Gulf, MSRC has 10 large skimmer boats, with two more on the way. ([See pictures of the Exxon-Valdez disaster.](#))



In addition to operating boats, MSRC acts as the oil industry's general contractor, doling out work to subcontractors as needed. MSRC's CEO, Steve Benz, says that with most spills, his company can handle 80% of the work. But the magnitude of the Gulf disaster has flipped that equation. "Billions and billions of dollars of work will be going to our subcontractors," says Benz. ([Comment on this story.](#))

One of MSRC's largest subcontractors is Clean Harbors. The company has 2,000 people on its payroll around the Gulf, cleaning beaches and marshland. Scott Metzger, who is heading up Clean Harbors' efforts in the Gulf, has spent nearly every day since the end of April in the region, only occasionally heading home to Plymouth, Mass., to "recharge." The Gulf spill — the latest estimate puts it at 74 million to 145 million gal. (280 million to 549 million L) — is the largest Metzger has ever seen. "Each of these unique environments requires different techniques," he says. "You have to be careful not to cause more damage than if you just left the oil where it was." ([See 12 people to blame for the oil spill.](#))

Even companies far north of the Gulf region are benefiting. Before the spill, Elastec/American Marine, based in Carmi, Ill., had the largest inventory of oil boom in the -country — 44,350 ft. (13,500 m). It sold out. The company is rapidly manufacturing more and now has orders for an additional 300,000 ft. (91,000 m). Besides boom, Elastec, founded in 1990, makes handheld skimmers that lift oil out of the ocean and separate it from water. The company's specialty is a drum-shaped skimmer, which Elastec executives say captures more oil and less seawater than other devices. Orders are pouring in. "We have our factory working two 10-hour shifts a day, six days a week," says Jeff Bohleber, Elastec's chief financial officer. "We are already set to double our typical annual revenue, and we will probably exceed that. It's the best year we've ever had." ([Watch TIME's video "Portraits From the Oil Spill."](#))

The Exxon Valdez spill led to regulations that benefited the spill-response industry. This disaster is likely to as well. "There are going to be opportunities for expansion and more research and development," says Miller. "This event is going to have a substantial impact on the industry." That means the dollars for Miller and others will continue to flow long after this oil has been mopped up. It's what you might call a spillover effect.

[See the world's top 10 environmental disasters.](#)

[See pictures of people protesting BP.](#)

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Jul 08, 2010

## Obama team asks BP to explain new sealing plan on oil spill

12:36 PM

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The White House has sent BP a letter asking if it can speed up new capping plans for the Gulf Coast oil spill because of the prospect of bad weather later this summer.

In the letter, oil spill point person Thad Allen asks for details about BP's plan to remove a "top hat" that has slowed down the Gulf Coast oil spill, and replace it with a "sealing cap" that would capture even more of the oil.

One problem: Between the removal of the top hat, and the replacement of the sealing cap, the oil flow will temporarily increase.



CAPTION

By Evan Vucci, AP

Allen's letter, addressed to BP Chief Managing Director Bob Dudley, also asks about plans to do the two operations simultaneously, as well as information on how BP plans to permanently cap the well full-time.

"I must have knowledge of the steps and decision points involved; mitigation efforts to be implemented; and contingency plans if these efforts are not successful," Allen wrote.

The leak isn't expected to be fully plugged until mid-August.

Allen asked BP to respond to his letter within 24 hours.

In the meantime, Obama administration lawyers are in a New Orleans appeals court today, asking it to re-instate a six-month moratorium on deep water oil drilling.

(Posted by David Jackson)

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# Relief well drilling ahead of schedule

By the CNN Wire Staff

## STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- **NEW:** One relief well could intercept the main well in seven to 10 days
- **NEW:** Cleanup could make great strides as better weather moves in
- A court battle over a ban on offshore drilling happens Thursday
- The massive oil spill in Gulf of Mexico prompted Obama to seek ban

**New Orleans, Louisiana (CNN)** -- The first relief well BP is drilling in the Gulf of Mexico could intercept the leaking Deepwater Horizon well in seven to 10 days, the man heading the federal response to the oil crisis said Thursday.

Retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen said the length of time it will take to seal the well will depend on "where the oil is coming up through, where they can intercept, where they can put the mud in, where they can put the cement plug."

He reiterated that despite that accelerated time frame, he's sticking with mid-August as the expected time for the "bottomkill" procedure to be completed. "Certain things could move that up," Allen said, but for the second time in as many days, he couched that optimism, saying, "It's better to under-promise and over-deliver."

BP is in the final stages of drilling one of two relief wells, which is now 17,780 feet deep, Allen said. He called it "the slowest, most meticulous part."

After several days of rough seas, improved weather Thursday was allowing oil skimmers to restart their cleanup efforts in the Gulf, said Allen. He added that forecasters expected good weather for the next 7 to 10 days, and he hoped to make significant progress in the operation during "a weather window that we may not see again this summer."

Allen said he is asking BP to present a timeline within the next 24 hours detailing the series of events to take place. The timeline would outline how BP would concurrently hook up the oil-recover vessel, the Helix Producer, and replace the existing containment cap with a larger, more permanent seal. He said it would make sense to replace the containment cap and hook up the Helix Producer at the same time.

Rough seas earlier in the week delayed plans to deploy the Helix Producer, which could bring in up to 25,000 barrels of oil a day from the ruptured well, upping the total possible collection to 53,000 barrels of oil a day, which Allen said is the maximum amount of oil capture in the current setup. BP says it recovered about 24,575 barrels on Wednesday, bringing the total number of barrels removed from the Gulf to about 706,700.

Allen also said switching out the containment caps would increase the potential oil gathered each day to between 60,000 and 80,000 barrels -- more than the 35,000-60,000 barrels scientists estimate is spewing from the breached well each day. However, while the caps are being switched out, oil would flow freely into the Gulf, so having the Helix Producer up and running to gulp up the gushing oil would be crucial.

While the relief-well drilling and Gulf cleanup continue, the battle over President Obama's effort to suspend deepwater drilling moves Thursday to a federal appeals court in Louisiana.

Oral arguments in a case that challenged the Obama administration's six-month ban on deepwater drilling start in the afternoon in New Orleans.

An advocacy group called Alliance for Justice made a pre-emptive strike against the court on Wednesday. It released a report alleging that many appeals court judges have extensive ties to the oil industry, including the three-judge panel that will preside over the drilling ban hearing.

7/8/2010

Relief well drilling ahead of schedule - ...

The extended cleanup time is wreaking havoc on local businesses. Oysterman Vlaho Mjehovich told CNN the damage to the local waters has long-term repercussions.


"I've seen areas go for 10 years without oysters coming back. This is not going to be done and fixed overnight. People have to understand. This will take years to come back. What do you do? I had a business. Now, I don't have a business. My business was taken from me overnight. I have to go look for a job now now," Mjehovich said.

Fears over the spill are now extending all the way to Florida's Atlantic shores. Small tar balls continued to wash ashore Wednesday at Cocoa Beach, just south of Cape Canaveral, but their source will have to be determined through testing in the coming days.

**CNN's Vivian Kuo contributed to this report**

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## New batfish species found under Gulf oil spill

12:18pm EDT

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Researchers have discovered two previously unknown species of bottom-dwelling fish in the Gulf of Mexico, living right in the area affected by the BP oil spill.

Researchers identified new species of pancake batfishes, a flat fish rarely seen because of the dark depths they favor. They are named for the clumsy way they "walk" along the sea bottom, like a bat crawling.

"One of the fishes that we describe is completely restricted to the oil spill area," John Sparks of the American Museum of Natural History in New York, said in a statement released on Thursday.

"If we are still finding new species of fishes in the Gulf, imagine how much diversity, especially microdiversity, is out there that we do not know about."

Writing in the *Journal of Fish Biology*, Sparks and his colleagues named the species as *Halieutichthys intermedius* and *H. bispinosus*. A third already known species called *H. aculeatus* also only lives in waters affected by the spill, they said.

Pancake batfishes have round, flat bodies with giant heads and mouths they can thrust forward. They use arm-like fins to drag themselves along the bottom and a modified dorsal fin excretes fluid to lure prey.

Sparks said the three species had been considered just one species, but his team found distinct differences.

"These discoveries underscore the potential loss of undocumented biodiversity that a disaster of this scale may portend," he said.

BP aims to plug the well late this month or in August.

The well has pumped millions of gallons (liters) of oil into the Gulf, coating shorelines and animals and having as yet unknown effects on creatures living in deep waters.

It threatens to devastate the Gulf region's multibillion-dollar fishing and tourist industries.

(Reporting by [Maggie Fox](#), editing by Vicki Allen)

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## Tropical depression soaks Mexico

11:23am EDT

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - A tropical depression churned into the western Gulf of Mexico coast on Thursday near Mexico's border with Texas, a region badly flooded by Hurricane Alex last week, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said.

The depression was starting to make landfall around mid-morning but the NHC said it was unlikely to become a tropical storm. A tropical storm warning in place for the lower Rio Grande valley along the border, from south of Baffin Bay, in Texas to Rio San Fernando, Mexico, was expected to be lifted later in the day.

Hurricane Alex battered northern Mexico last week as a Category 2 storm, dumping heavy rains and flooding the major business city of Monterrey, ripping apart highways, sweeping away soccer and baseball pitches, killing 12 people and causing \$700 million of damage.

Alex also shuttered some oil and natural gas production in the Gulf and disrupted BP's efforts to contain its massive oil spill off the Louisiana coast.

Thursday's tropical depression was expected to drench the border region with up to 10 inches of rain in some places and buffet the area with strong winds.

Dams along the Rio Grande river marking the border with Texas were already overflowing and two bridges linking Laredo, Texas, with Nuevo Laredo, in northern Tamaulipas state, were closed by floodwaters. The crossing is one of the principal routes for all U.S.-Mexico trade. (Reporting by [Tim Gaynor](#); Editing by [Catherine Bremer](#))

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# New storm heads for swamped Texas-Mexico border



By JORGE VARGAS, Associated Press Writer

1 hr 49 mins ago

NUEVO LAREDO, Mexico – A rain-packed tropical depression neared a midday collision with the Texas-Mexico border region on Thursday, a new threat to cities already struggling with floods along the Rio Grande and its tributaries.

Police in Laredo, Texas, were evacuating people in low-lying areas as the rain-swollen Rio Grande rose to more than 30 feet (9 meters) above flood stage and forced closure of at least two bridges linking Mexico and the U.S.

Tens of thousands of people already had been forced from their homes in Mexican towns as officials dumped torrents of water into flood-swollen rivers to avoid the risk of dams overflowing out of control due to last week's Hurricane Alex and its aftermath.

Humberto Moreira, the governor of the border state of Coahuila, said that more than 20,000 homes had been flooded in his state alone, and about 80,000 people had "lost all of their furniture."

The U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said a new tropical depression was likely to blow in from the Gulf of Mexico around midday in extreme southern Texas and northeastern Mexico. It could bring another 4 to 8 inches (10 to 20 centimeters) of rain.

A tropical storm warning was in effect for the Texas coast south of Baffin Bay and for Mexico north of the San Fernando River.

Hurricane Alex, unusually water-heavy, devastated the major Mexican city of Monterrey, and more than 100,000 people were still without water service this week. At least 12 people died in the flooding, according to Nuevo Leon state officials.

The hurricane's remnants caused rivers to rise across the area, forcing evacuations in Del Rio, Texas, some 110 miles (180 kilometers) upstream from Laredo, as well as in the Mexican state of Coahuila.

To the southeast, officials in the Mexican state of Nuevo Leon evacuated nearly 18,000 people from houses in Ciudad Anahuac for fear that water would overflow the Venustiano Carranza dam and threaten lives. Water was still rising in the town on Thursday.

An airplane on an inspection tour of the flood zone crashed Wednesday, killing the mayor of the border town of Piedras Negras, the state public works director, a municipal civil defense official, a government photographer and the pilot and co-pilot.

Water behind the binational Amistad Dam on the Rio Grande already was at its highest level since 1974, according to the International Boundary and Water Commission, forcing officials to release water from it at the fastest rate in a quarter century.

The commission said the downstream Falcon dam would probably reach capacity within the next few days, suggesting future releases there will raise water levels along the river's lower reaches.

Much of that downstream area is protected against flooding by levees, but Mexico's National Water Commission said it was worried about low-lying settlements, most built by poor people without official permission.

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Associated Press writer Oscar Villalba in Piedras Negras, Mexico, contributed to this report.

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## New spill factor: La Nina could add to storms

Ocean system forming, adding to already high Gulf hurricane threat



updated 1 hour 44 minutes ago

NEW YORK — A La Nina weather pattern, the opposite of its more infamous cousin El Nino, will likely ramp up in July and August, potentially boosting hurricane formation in the Gulf of Mexico, the U.S. Climate Prediction Center forecast on Thursday.

"La Nina conditions are likely to develop during July-August 2010," the CPC, an office under the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, stated in its monthly update.

La Nina spawns colder-than-normal waters in the equatorial Pacific Ocean. In contrast, El Nino is an abnormal warming of those waters. Both wreak havoc in the weather from the U.S. to India and occur every three to four years.

The emergence of a La Nina is of particular concern to the oil industry in the Gulf, already reeling from the massive oil spill caused by a leaking BP well.

Several forecasters have said the number of

hurricanes striking the United States increases sharply during La Nina years and shrinks when El Nino hits.

Increased wind shear in an El Nino tends to rip apart embryonic storms in the Atlantic basin and Caribbean Sea. But those winds are limited in a La Nina year, allowing storms to flourish.

Last May, NOAA predicted this Atlantic storm season could be the worst since the record-breaking 2005, when Hurricane Katrina ravaged New Orleans, Hurricane Wilma slammed into Florida's citrus groves, and Hurricane Rita hit hard the oil rigs in the Gulf and refineries along the Gulf Coast.

NOAA forecast up to 23 named storms, of which 14 could power up to hurricanes. A

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record 15 hurricanes struck in 2005. June has already produced the first hurricane in 15 years, Alex, which dissipated in Mexico last weekend.

Storms are a particular concern in the Gulf, which holds about 27 percent of the U.S.'s oil and 15 percent of its natural gas, according to the federal Department of Energy.

### **Corn Belt could see dry spell**

La Nina also poses a threat to crops in the U.S. Midwest and in countries like agricultural powerhouses Brazil, Argentina and India.

For American farmers, La Nina increases the chance of a dry spell in the Corn Belt, especially during the critical pollination stage of the crop in July.

Rain is vital in this month for corn yields. And those showers are also needed in August for soybeans when they go into pod setting, which contains the beans and affects the yield of the crop.

The United States is the world's largest producer and exporter of corn and soybeans, and any production problem could lead to higher feed prices across the globe.

Worldwide, the effect of a La Nina would spread into countries like Brazil, one of the world's top agricultural powers, and India, a major producer and consumer of everything from sugar to oilseeds.

In a La Nina, CPC said drier-than-normal weather can occur from southern Brazil all the way to central Argentina during their winter.

Aside from sugar cane, that may also affect coffee production in Brazil, the world's top producer. The Latin American country is the world's second biggest exporter of soybeans. Argentina is the biggest exporter of soymeal and soyoil.

For Brazil, heavy rains during an El Nino in 2009 hampered the harvesting of its sugar cane. But this could turn into a prolonged dry spell as La Nina strengthens.

CPC said the Indian monsoon, which weakened in 2009 to its worst level in more than 30 years, tends to be greater than normal especially in the northwestern part of the country in a La Nina year.



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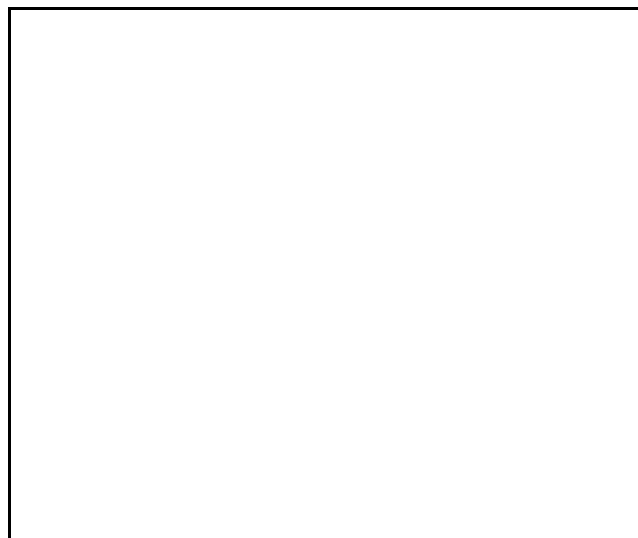
In between, a La Nina tends to increase rainfall over Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and northern Australia. All these countries suffer from severe drought when an El Nino hits.

El Nino means "little boy" in Spanish and was named after the Christ child because it was first noticed by anchovy fishermen in Latin America around one Christmastime in the 19th Century.

The moderately strong El Nino of 2009 has just wound down and this La Nina is kicking up hard on its heels.

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## Angle: \$20b escrow a 'slush fund'; oil companies shouldn't be driven out



AP

Nevada Senate candidate Sharron Angle's (R) controversial views have given Harry Reid's (D) campaign hope that he can be re-elected.

**Domenico Montanaro**

**writes:** It's been said repeatedly that **Harry Reid** is one of the [most vulnerable incumbents this cycle](#). But Democrats believe the Senate majority leader's chances have improved because of his opponent's controversial views.

**Sharron Angle's** views were on display again, when in a radio interview -- sent around by Democrats and written about on left-leaning writer

[Greg Sargent's blog](#) -- Angle called the \$20 billion BP escrow a "slush fund" -- despite BP agreeing to set up the fund. Angle joins a chorus of right-wing candidates, elected members like **Joe Barton**, and talking heads like Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck, who have also referred to account that way. Money from the fund, which is being independently administered, is to be distributed to those affected by the Gulf oil spill.

She said the government is "overreacting," the Environmental Protection Agency is "all about money," and that "the petroleum industry shouldn't be penalized for one bad person's actions. It would be like throwing us all in prison because one person committed murder," she said. She added that the government should avoid "overregulating" oil companies, because they risk having them leave the country. And that the government should instead make sure that oil companies are adhering to a "checklist." (Though it was unclear how it would enforce that without fines and penalties, or what incentive oil companies would have to adherence without them.)

She even brought up Saul Alinsky.

**President Obama** helps raise money for Reid tonight in Las Vegas. Expect to hear him speak to these comments.

[Listen to the audio here.](#)

### Here's the transcript:

QUESTION: ... I wanted to know what she thought of the \$20 billion slush fund and whether or not government should be able to do that to a private company.

ANGLE: Well, the short answer is no, government shouldn't be doing that to a private company. And I think you named it. **Clearly, it's a slush fund.** The problem with, even the EPA is that it's all about money. It's the taxing, fining agency and what we really needed was a management agency. You know, what happened in the Gulf was BP didn't do their checklist, and we need somebody there to say, 'Did you do your checklist. Well, they cut corners, didn't do their checklist and what we got was criminal, actually criminal and willful act here, because they were doing those cut corners.

**But everyone in the petroleum industry shouldn't be penalized for one bad person's actions. It would be like throwing us all in prison because one person committed murder. And that's exactly what's going on here** is it's an **overreaction** by government **for not the right reasons.** They're actually using this crisis, if you will, 'cause they never waste one -- Saul Alinsky's rule for radicals -- [laughter of host] they are **using this crisis now to get in cap-and-trade and every fine and penalty and slush fund** like you said and so, what we really needed is something in a management situation where we know that they're actually doing the checklist, but going forward, we need to talk about how do we regulate an industry and keep them here doing what they do, which is creating jobs without overregulating them and driving them out of a country."

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### **Ron Indiana**

Damn, I should have included Sharron Angle in my insanity comments this morning. She fits right in.

#1 - Thu Jul 8, 2010 12:14 PM EDT

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4 votes

### **no joe, no bo, nj**

Well, Ron, you are entitled to your opinion, but you might want to do a little research into the 'excrow' fund, and how it is being administered.

As I have said before on here, when I was in the Keys in early May, BP had just set up its second office to deal with claims

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## Fla. gov calls legislature for oil drilling ban

(AP) – 36 minutes ago

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Gov. Charlie Crist has called a special session of the state Legislature to get a constitutional ban on offshore oil drilling in Florida waters on the November ballot.

Crist on Thursday said the session will be held July 20 to July 23.

Crist has said he has the support of Panhandle legislators, where some beaches have been oiled by the massive Gulf of Mexico spill. But legislative leaders in areas so far unaffected have been uncooperative.

The amendment would require 60 percent approval from voters in November.

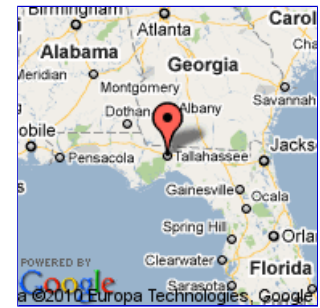
Offshore drilling is now banned by Florida statute but could be changed by legislative action. A constitutional ban would require voter approval before it could be reversed.

Crist is running as an independent for the U.S. Senate.

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**AP** Associated Press

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Florida Times-Union (blog) - 38 minutes ago

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# Forecast for Gulf impacting spill containment plan



By JULIE PACE, Associated Press Writer

27 mins ago

WASHINGTON – Rough weather forecasts in the Gulf of Mexico could force BP and Obama administration officials to speed up plans to connect a third containment vessel to the blown-out undersea oil well.

Workers had planned to replace the current "top cap" with a "sealing cap" first, then connect a containment vessel that could collect 25,000 barrels of oil per day. Officials are now considering a plan to replace the cap and hook up the containment vessel simultaneously. The would temporarily decrease the amount of oil being contained.

Senior administration officials say national incident commander Thad Allen sent BP a letter, asking about contingency plans in the event they have to proceed with the simultaneous maneuver. The oil company has 24 hours to respond.

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# Allen: Relief well timing depends on oil's spread Associated Press

By JAY REEVES, Associated Press Writer

54 mins ago

THEODORE, Ala. — A relief well being drilled deep into the seafloor of the Gulf of Mexico to shut down the gushing well could be completed ahead of a long-set deadline of mid-August only if conditions are ideal, government and BP officials said Thursday.

National Incident Commander and retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen said Thursday that the relief well is expected intercept and penetrate the Deepwater Horizon well pipe about 18,000 feet below sea level within seven to 10 days.

But they won't know how long it will take to stop the oil until they get there. The gushing well has several rings, and oil could be coming up through multiple rings, Allen said.

The plan is to pump heavy mud and then cement into the well to overcome the upward pressure of the huge oil reservoir below.

If the oil is coming through the outer ring of the well, then they will have to pump in mud and cement to stop that layer first. Then they would have to drill through the hardened cement and repeat the process in each ring until they reach the center pipe and do it again.

That scenario would push into the middle of August, which is the timeline the company and government officials have held to for weeks, despite repeated reports that the drilling was ahead of schedule and the oil could be stopped as soon as late July.

"If you have to exhaust all means for the ways that hydrocarbons are coming up the pipe, then that puts you into middle August," Allen said.

If the oil is only coming up the center pipe, then it's possible to stop the leak sooner. BP spokesman Scott Dean said late July has been suggested as a completion time if everything is ideal. A single major storm is enough to cause delays. That's why the company is sticking with mid-August.

The relief well is currently the best hope for stanching the oil leak sparked by the April 20 explosion aboard the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig, which killed 11 workers and began an environmental catastrophe for the region.

Shaving even days off the mid-August timeline would stop millions of gallons of oil from escaping into



the Gulf. The broken well has spewed between 86 and 169 million gallons of oil, according to federal estimates. That's enough oil to fill about 3.4 million standard bathtubs.

The weather will have to cooperate. Lingering tropical weather that began last week with the faraway Hurricane Alex halted offshore skimming operations and caused high seas that have delayed the hookup of a third vessel expected to suck oil from the gushing well head.

Another tropical depression formed in the Gulf on Wednesday and was closely following the path of Alex to the coast at the border of Texas and Mexico. It was expected to have a minimal effect on the eastern Gulf.

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## Giant skimmer gets another test, but faces doubt

(AP) – 1 hour ago

NEW ORLEANS — The giant Taiwanese oil skimmer known as 'A Whale' is getting another chance to prove its value in the Gulf of Mexico.

But the leader of the federal response, Thad Allen, doubts the effectiveness of the "A Whale."

The ship is supposed to suck up to 21 million gallons of oily water per day.

Allen said Thursday it seems more useful in a huge pool of oil than in thousands of smaller slicks.

Bob Grantham, spokesman for TMT Shipping, says the U.S. Coast Guard has approved another week of testing.

Grantham says the vessel has already made changes, including a new system for directing oily water from the ship's intake vents to its storage tanks.

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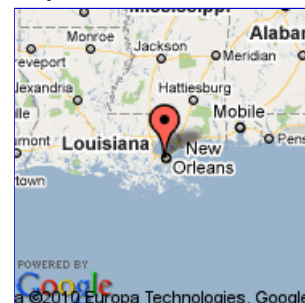
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## E<sup>2</sup> Wire

THE HILL'S Energy & Environment Blog

### Spill response chief sticks with mid-August date for capping BP well

By Ben Geman - 07/08/10 11:43 AM ET

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Adm. Thad Allen, the top federal official overseeing the BP oil spill response, said Thursday that mid-August remains the target date for killing BP's out-of-control Gulf of Mexico well.

Allen's comments follow widely circulated remarks by BP managing director Robert Dudley, who told *The Wall Street Journal*, "In a perfect world with no interruptions, it's possible to be ready to stop the well between July 20 and July 27."

"My position is that it will be in the middle of August before that well is capped. ... The current government estimate is the middle of August," said Allen, the national incident commander, at a press conference in Alabama.

"It could be shorter. It could happen, but I am not going to assume that," Allen said, later adding, "If it happens sooner than that, I think we can all jump for joy."

Dudley himself offered several caveats to the accelerated time frame, telling the *Journal* that killing the well in July is "unlikely."

BP is drilling a so-called relief well that will intercept the blown-out well at a depth of roughly 18,000 feet, pump in heavy muds and cap it with cement. The first relief well (there is also a backup being drilled) will be poised to begin penetrating the well structure in seven to 10 days, Allen said.

But from there, intercepting the oil is a highly delicate process, and the timeline will depend on several variables, he said.

Allen noted that it is unclear what part or parts of the structure the oil is flowing through, likening it to a series of hollow tree rings that will take progressively longer to reach and plug.

Oil flowing through all of the areas would require until mid-August to address, he said.

Scott Dean, a spokesman for BP, said the company's timeline is consistent with Allen's comments, noting that Dudley was presenting a best-case scenario. August remains the "highest probability," Dean said.

Comments (2)

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## E<sup>2</sup> Wire

THE HILL'S Energy & Environment Blog

### Reid foe Angle calls BP's oil spill escrow account a 'slush fund'

By Ben Geman - 07/08/10 01:05 PM ET

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Nevada GOP Senate candidate Sharron Angle on Wednesday called the \$20 billion BP escrow account created under White House pressure a "slush fund" – echoing phrasing by Rep. Joe Barton (R-Texas) that Democrats pounced on to cast Republicans as handmaidens of oil companies.

Angle's comment is sure to provide political ammunition for Democrats seeking to keep the Nevada seat in the hands of Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), who is locked in a tight race with her.

Angle, speaking on the Alan Stock Show, agreed with a caller on the radio program that criticized the account for oil spill claims, which BP agreed to create under intense White House pressure and does not manage.

"The short answer is no, government shouldn't be doing that to a private company," Angle said. "And I think you named it clearly — it's a slush fund."

Angle attacked BP, alleging the company cut corners and engaged in criminal behavior, and called for better federal oversight. But she then slammed what she called the Obama administration's overreaction to the oil spill. "Everyone in the petroleum industry shouldn't be penalized for one bad person's actions," she said, alleging "an overreaction by government for not the right reasons."

"They are actually using this crisis, if you will — because they never waste one, Saul Alinsky's Rules for Radicals — they are using this crisis now to get in cap-and-trade, and every fine and penalty, and slush fund," Angle said.

Alinsky, author of the book Rules for Radicals, was a pioneering community organizer in Chicago who died in 1972 and has influenced generations of left-leaning grassroots activists.

Angle on Thursday backed off the "slush fund" comment, stating that she "shouldn't have used the term" and that it was "incorrect."

"My position is that the creation of this fund to compensate victims was an important first step — BP caused this disaster and they should pay for it. But there are multiple parties at fault here and there should be a thorough investigation," she said in a prepared statement.

"We need to look into the actions, (or inactions) of the Administration and why the regulatory agency in charge of oversight was asleep at the wheel while BP was cutting corners. Every party involved should be held fully accountable," Angle added.

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But Reid's campaign had already attacked Angle's comments.

"The fact that Sharron Angle has sided with BP and says they shouldn't have to guarantee the funds to cleanup their mess, risking a taxpayer bailout, is just the latest example of the extreme and dangerous agenda she would bring to Washington," said Reid spokesman Kelly Steele in a prepared statement.

Barton last month used the phrase "slush fund" to describe the BP account when he apologized to BP CEO Tony Hayward for what he called a White House "shakedown" of the oil giant. Barton later retracted his apology under heavy pressure from GOP leaders.

But Democrats have nonetheless used Barton's comments to allege the GOP does not stand up to oil companies. For instance, the Democratic National Committee [highlighted them in a recent ad](#) that also featured comments by Kentucky GOP Senate candidate Rand Paul.

Paul, in May, drew widespread attention when he said President Barack Obama's criticism of BP "sounds really un-American."

*This post was updated at 1:47 p.m.*

## Comments (9)

Angle is right — this is of course effectively an Obama slush fund. And notice how since the oil spill is not in the news, Obama hasn't flown down there for another photo op.

BY **OBAMAS KATRINA** on 07/08/2010 at 13:35

Not sure what else you could call it? I say Angle should keep%

BY **MARK THE ANTI ALLEN** on 07/08/2010 at 13:48

Not sure what else you could call it? I say Angle should keep piling on, make the difference between her and that idiot Reid as large as possible. Then the fence sitters will not vote, the conservatives will turn out in droves and the libs will disgusted enough to also not vote in droves. The truth hurrrts.

BY **MARK THE ANTI ALLEN** on 07/08/2010 at 13:48

Yes, A slush fund a criminal act of acting stupidly before getting the facts first then due process then If found guilty a penalty phase. Wouldn't it be nice If some of the people in congress could grasp this concept. God bless AMERICA. Michael G. McDonald

BY **MICHAEL G. MCDONALD** on 07/08/2010 at 13:51

obama BP slush fund is worst them Madhoff Pontzi scheme and Madhoff is in jail where do you think obama, reid, pelosi, schumer, dodd, frank, range,l rahm emmanuel should be????? Just a simple question

BY **JBOBOJAKE** on 07/08/2010 at 13:52

Hey! It's the truth. It is a slush fund and BP is also paying through other ways as well until they possibly go bankrupt. Others in the administration are to blame but, hey, we'll overlook them.I hope folks see how un-informational our news media is today. No news on Aghanistan, no real news on the economy so I'll give it. Unemployment nation wide is actually over 20%. There I helped you with the news Hill. Do I get a commission?

BY **A** on 07/08/2010 at 14:04

Barton was right, Angles is right, everyone so far posting that it is a slush fund is right. There is an article today about how fishermen in LA were getting weekly checks from BP. Now their checks aren't coming. You better believe that this money is going to lawyers and other Democratic Party cronies like Environmental Groups. They are corrupt thieves.

BY **ANDREW** on 07/08/2010 at 14:21

For a must-read on the issue from a publication that endorsed Obama for President, see [http://www.economist.com/node/16377269?story\\_id=16377269source=features\\_box\\_main](http://www.economist.com/node/16377269?story_id=16377269source=features_box_main)

BY **SOUTHSIDE PUTIN** on 07/08/2010 at 14:23

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## Texas tar ball prompts soil, water sampling

Associated Press

Thursday, July 8, 2010

GALVESTON — Texas officials on Wednesday continued collecting soil and water samples along the state's coastline, part of their response plan after this week's confirmation that crude from the Gulf oil spill has made its way onto the state's shores.

Biologists with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department are collecting the samples to give them a data baseline they will use to assess the spill's effect on Texas if more tar balls and oil are found.

The sample collection began Monday after officials announced that test results confirmed tar balls found over the weekend along the Texas Gulf Coast were from the BP oil spill, said Winston Denton, a biologist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

On Wednesday, Denton and other biologists wearing waders and rubber gloves gathered samples of dirt, water and various invertebrate animals such as mollusks at two Galveston beaches. The samples, placed in brown jars and plastic bags, will be sent to private labs for testing.

The data obtained will be used to develop plans "to minimize the impact on wildlife" should more oil hit the Texas shoreline, Denton said.

Samples are being collected over the next two weeks from Port Arthur near the Louisiana border to Port Isabel in south Texas, said Mike Cox, a spokesman for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Texas officials continue waiting for test results of samples from five ships that hauled waste from the oil spill to the Galveston area. The results could determine whether the ships are the sources of the tar balls found in Galveston and the Bolivar Peninsula or if they came naturally on currents.

Officials have said the consistency and light weathering of the tar balls seems to indicate the oil might have hitched a ride on a ship that worked in the spill.

U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer Richard Brahm said an additional 3.5 gallons of tar balls had been found on Galveston and Bolivar since late Tuesday. They were being

tested to determine their origin.

Galveston Mayor Joe Jaworski on Wednesday continued promoting the message that despite the discovery of tar balls "all 32 miles of Galveston's beaches are clean, safe, open and awaiting summer tourists." Tourism is one of the major sources of revenue for Galveston's economy.

BP spokesman Daren Beaudou said the British oil company is reviewing a request from Texas to provide \$25 million to pay for the cleanup efforts.

"Ultimately we are responsible for the clean up and we will take care of any materials that will happen to impact Texas," he said.



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## Tests show tar balls found in Texas come from BP well

**By Jennifer Latson**- Houston Chronicle

Web Posted: 07/07/2010 11:57 CDT



Mike Goralski, a representative for BP, and Chip Wood, an Assessment Biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife, demonstrate for the media the baseline coastal sampling procedure Wednesday at Galveston Island State Park. BILLY SMITH II/HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Tar balls continue to wash up along the Texas Coast, and all of the testing since the weekend points to a single source: BP's gushing well in the Gulf of Mexico.

Testing confirmed Wednesday that tar balls found Monday on McFaddin Beach, near Port Arthur, came from the well, Coast Guard Petty Officer Richard Brahm said.

Another 3.5 gallons of tar balls rolled ashore on Galveston Island and the Bolivar Peninsula on Tuesday and Wednesday, Brahm said, bringing the total since the weekend to 8.5 gallons.

The newest crop is being sent for testing, he said. Even before the deadly April 20 blowout, it wasn't

uncommon for tar to wash ashore in Galveston.

“Some of it is older oil that washes up. It happens all the time,” Brahm said. “We want to test it to make sure that it’s not coming from a new source.”

Coast Guard officials said Tuesday that the recent tar deposits likely got to Texas on the hulls or in the ballast tanks of vessels that sailed through the oil slick, rather than flowing on currents from the site off Louisiana’s southeastern coast.

Test results were pending Wednesday on five vessels that officials say might’ve brought in the oil.

Texas’ taste of tar comes as a tropical weather system stalled efforts to collect more of the crude at the well site.

BP officials had hoped by now to have hooked up a new vessel, the Helix Producer, that would double its collection capacity to 53,000 barrels a day.

But sea swells Wednesday delayed that task for a few more days, said retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, who’s heading the government’s spill response.

Two vessels now in place have been collecting a total of about 25,000 barrels a day.

The well is flowing at an estimated rate of up to 60,000 barrels a day, or 2.5 million gallons.

Administration and BP officials still are evaluating whether to replace the containment cap over the well with another that could have a tighter seal, Allen said.

A tighter cap, once in place, would capture more oil than the existing system, but thousands of barrels being captured now would flow free while workers removed the old cap and bolted on a new one.

Officials also continued to mull the use of a massive Taiwanese oil skimmer, the A Whale, which is undergoing tests in the gulf.

The permanent solution to the spill, drilling a relief well, is ahead of schedule for its targeted mid-August completion date.

Allen said the relief well is less than 260 feet from the original well, but he warned the final feet would be the trickiest, and any unforeseen issues could slow the process.

“This is a very slow, precise process,” he said. “While it’s nice to be slightly ahead of schedule, I’m sticking with the mid-August date because we don’t know the condition of the (original well) until we penetrate it.”

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## Economic peril seen from offshore drilling ban

Wed, Jul 7 2010

By [Anna Driver](#)

HOUSTON (Reuters) - A Gulf of Mexico deepwater drilling ban has already cost offshore jobs in a nascent U.S. economic recovery and a lengthy moratorium will put the industry at peril, sector executives said on Wednesday.

Their remarks came a day ahead of a court hearing on the moratorium imposed by the Obama administration, which says it is needed to prevent a repeat of the BP Plc well blowout that brought environmental havoc to the Gulf, polluting beaches, killing wildlife and scaring away tourists.

"We're going to see companies go out of business. We're going to see workers leave this industry," said Louis Raspino, chairman of the International Association of Drilling Contractors and chief executive officer of driller Pride International Inc.

"In a very, very short period of time, we're going to see this industry implode," Raspino said.

His remarks were made at a packed town hall meeting in this oil industry center to discuss the 6-month ban, put into effect after the BP well ruptured in an explosion on April 20 that killed 11, but immediately challenged in court.

While the legal dispute is pending, oil firms are holding up new drilling operations in the Gulf.

Smaller companies in particular cannot afford to lose six months of revenue waiting as the government decides on new regulations to make offshore drilling safer, Raspino said.

The oil drilling industry goes head-to-head with the Obama administration in court on Thursday over the White House effort to suspend deepwater drilling.

Last month, a federal judge ruled against the drilling ban, calling it "arbitrary and capricious." The government appealed, saying the suspension would allow time to probe the spill's cause and ensure other drilling rigs operate safely.

Chad Deaton, chief executive officer of oilfield services company Baker Hughes Inc, said at the Houston meeting that his firm is moving workers out of the Gulf of Mexico to jobs in other countries.

"Short-term, we're relocating some of our people on the offshore rigs," Deaton said after the meeting. "Fortunately, activity around the world is fairly strong."

"The blanket moratorium on offshore drilling is the wrong decision," said U.S. Representative Pete Olson, a Republican who represents voters in Houston's suburbs. "The policy is hurting the entire Houston economy and increasing costs for all Americans."

While defending the moratorium decision, the Obama administration is also working on revisions due to be announced shortly to make the ban more flexible for drilling companies.

The moratorium has strong support from environmentalists, and in Brussels the European Union's energy chief said the bloc should consider its own moratorium on new deepwater drilling until a probe into the BP spill is completed.

The Energy Information Agency said on Wednesday the ban would cut 82,000 barrels per day of production next year. The agency sees total U.S. production at more than 5 million BPD.

Houston, home to operations of big oil companies including ConocoPhillips and Chevron Corp, is viewed as the world's energy capital.

When Olson asked the room if they knew someone who had lost their job because of the moratorium, a sea of hands went up.

"Those are good American jobs," Olson said.

(Reporting by Anna Driver in Houston; editing by [Jerry Norton](#))

# New website for Deepwater Horizon information launched



[Show Caption](#) RestoreTheGulf.gov/Screen shot

- 2theadvocate.com staff report
- Published: Jul 7, 2010

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WASHINGTON—National Incident Commander Admiral Thad Allen today announced the launch of a new federal web portal, [www.RestoreTheGulf.gov](http://www.RestoreTheGulf.gov), dedicated to providing the American people with clear and accessible information and resources related to the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill response and recovery.

RestoreTheGulf.gov is designed to serve as a one-stop repository for news, data and operational updates related to administration-wide efforts to stop the BP oil leak and mitigate its impact on the environment, the economy and

public health—unifying web resources across the administration and increasing public access to the latest information.

The site offers information about the claims and appeals process—as well as other types of assistance available from federal, state, local and non-government sources—for individuals, businesses and communities who have been affected by the spill.

It will also contain information about plans for the long-term economic and environmental restoration in the Gulf Coast region.

The public can view details about current operations, resources in specific states and localities, mapping and data resources, and ongoing investigations as well as oil spill data collected throughout the federal government.

In addition, users can find information about ways to get involved—including volunteer opportunities, how to submit a suggestion and how to report concerns about oiled shoreline or wildlife—and a comprehensive list of all hotline numbers related to the oil spill.

Content for [www.RestoreTheGulf.gov](http://www.RestoreTheGulf.gov) will be gathered from a wide variety of sources, including the Unified Area Command's Joint Information Center in New Orleans, all federal agencies involved in the spill response and recovery efforts, and independent scientists and members of academia who are contributing their expertise.

While certain information will remain available on various agency websites and the White House blog, the new portal will link all resources together.

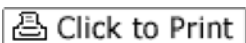
The web portal maintained by the Unified Area Command's Joint Information Center as a short term incident communication site ([www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com](http://www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com)) will be phased out over the coming weeks as information there is moved to [www.RestoreTheGulf.gov](http://www.RestoreTheGulf.gov).

*Information for this report from a press release from Joint Information Center Unified Command for the BP Oil Spill, Deepwater Horizon Response.*

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## NAHB to Sue EPA over Lead Paint Regulations

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**Press Release** Source: National Association of Home Builders On Thursday July 8, 2010, 4:37 pm EDT

WASHINGTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--A coalition of housing industry groups joined the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) today in announcing plans to file a lawsuit against the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for removing the "opt-out" provision from its Lead: Renovation, Repair and Painting rule.

The Lead: Renovation, Repair and Painting rule (LRRP) applies to homes constructed before 1978 when lead paint was banned. Its opt-out provision, which expired July 6, let consumers allow contractors to bypass extra preparation, clean-up and recordkeeping requirements in homes where there were no children under 6 or pregnant women, thus avoiding additional costs.

"Removing the opt-out provision more than doubles the number of homes subject to the regulation," said NAHB Chairman Bob Jones, a home builder and developer in Bloomfield Hills, Mich. "About 79 million homes are affected, even though EPA estimates that only 38 million homes contain lead-based paint. Removing the opt-out provision extends the rule to consumers who need no protection."

The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association, the National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association and the Window and Door Manufacturers Association joined NAHB in filing the petition for review in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

The group will challenge EPA's action on the grounds that the agency substantially amended its LRRP regulation without any new scientific data and before the regulation was even put into place on April 22, 2010.

"Even under the original rule, the opt-out provision was not available in homes where small children or pregnant women live," Jones said. "That shows that this change provides no additional protection to the people who are most vulnerable to lead-based paint hazards."

Remodelers' and other contractors' estimates of the additional costs associated with the lead-safe work practices average about \$2,400, but vary according to the size and type of job. For example, a complete window replacement requires the contractor to install thick vinyl sheeting to surround the work area both inside the home and outdoors – with prep time and material costs adding an estimated \$60 to \$170 for each window.

“Consumers trying to use rebates and incentive programs to make their homes more energy efficient will likely find those savings eaten up by the costs of the rule’s requirements. Worse, these costs may drive many consumers – even those with small children - to seek uncertified remodelers and other contractors. Others will likely choose to do the work themselves – or not do it at all – to save money. That does nothing to protect the population this rule was designed to safeguard,” Jones said.

**ABOUT NAHB:** The National Association of Home Builders is a Washington-based trade association representing more than 175,000 members involved in home building, remodeling, multifamily construction, property management, subcontracting, design, housing finance, building product manufacturing and other aspects of residential and light commercial construction. NAHB is affiliated with 800 state and local home builders associations around the country.

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## Rowlett Lakeshore Times > News

### Council briefed on solutions to water pressure issues

[Print Page](#)

By Kenny Green, [kgreen@acnpapers.com](mailto:kgreen@acnpapers.com)

Published: Thursday, July 8, 2010 4:15 PM CDT

The city council received a briefing from consultant Cheatham & Associates during its work session Tuesday regarding the cost to solve water pressure issues plaguing several parts of the city.

The city is required by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to provide a minimum of 35 pounds per square inch to each household. The optimum pressure for a household to have is 60 psi. The pressure in Rowlett varies from 38 to more than 60 psi. The city has received several resident complaints about lack of water pressure.

□ We have been working with (city) staff to do a report on types of pressure enhancement options, □ said Eddie Cheatham, consultant for Cheatham & Associates. □ In some areas [such as Castle Hills], there is no pressure at all. □

The solution to the problem was originally addressed in November 2008 in an update to the city's master water plan based on recommendations made by consultant Freese & Nichols Inc. The city asked Cheatham & Associates to take a second look at the problem Jan. 19. As a result of the second look, Cheatham & Associates provided the council with two additional options besides the three already offered by Freese and Nichols in 2008.

□ In order to achieve the goal we recommend raising the elevations of the elevated tanks, □ Cheatham said. □ We recommend raising the Kirby and Chiesa tanks 50 feet. □

Mayor Pro Tem Todd Gottel asked about the cost of building a new tank versus raising the old ones. The consultants indicated the cost would be about 30 percent higher to do that.

As part of Cheatham & Associates recommended plan, the Martha and Highway 66 tanks would be removed from the system and a new 2 million gallon tank would be built in the Liberty Grove area. The cost for the proposed solution would be \$41,649,092.

□ The end result would be the entire city would have a minimum pressure of 58 psi, □ Cheatham said, □ and 95 percent of the city would be at 60 psi or above. □

After questions were raised regarding the effects the increased pressure may have on older pipes in some areas □ where it was indicated the pressure may exceed 100 psi, the consultants stated that reducing valves could be used in problem areas to reduce the pressure.

The firm also gave the city an interim option to improve the pressure on the west side of town within a few months until the funds can be allocated to complete the full upgrades to the system. The interim option raises the total cost of the solution to \$42,038,852, but allows for a quicker solution to the problems on the west side of the city and creates an opportunity to begin the repair work using unallocated funds in the capital improvement fund.

Under the interim option, the city would raise the Kirby tank 50 feet and isolate the west side of town to the Kirby tank and the Rowlett Road Pump Station. This has the lowest five-year cost at \$7,270,301. The interim solution enhances pressure for entire west side of the city and could be completed in approximately six to nine months.

City manager Lynda Humble told the council the interim solution could be achieved using funds the city already has available.

□ This is a fundamental question of should we do this, □ said Chris Kilgore, Rowlett councilman. □ We are required to provide a minimum of 35 psi. In February the pressure (in some areas) was 30 psi for six hours. That moved this up to a high priority item. □

If the council approves the plan, Cheatham said once construction begins, the city will experience lower pressure for a few months while the tank is lowered and the additional 50 feet of elevation is being constructed.

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## U.S. EPA Proposal Will Drive Cleanup Of Dirty Power Plants And Save Lives

Main Category: [Water - Air Quality / Agriculture](#)

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Article Date: 08 Jul 2010 - 1:00 PDT

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The cleanup of power plants is long overdue. Power plant pollution causes tens of thousands of premature deaths each year. These plants are major contributors to particulate pollution and ozone in the East and Midwest. The American Lung Association welcomes today's proposal by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reduce power plant pollution across 31 states. The Code Red and Orange days we've experienced in the Eastern U.S. this week underscore the need for healthier air. Today's action is an important step towards safe and healthy air across the region.

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The EPA's Transport Rule will require the installation of modern pollution control technology on power plants across most of the eastern half of the United States. That technology will make sizable cuts in two dangerous pollutants: sulfur dioxide pollution levels by 71 percent and nitrogen oxide pollution by 52 percent. Power plants spew so much of these pollutants that they must be cleaned up if our nation hopes to reduce the burden of ozone smog and particle pollution in the East and Midwest. In 2005, the EPA started to clean up these plants, enacting the Clean Air Interstate Rule. The courts struck that Rule down in 2008, so the EPA had the opportunity to improve on it. The American Lung Association is pleased that today's proposal ensures greater pollution reductions than the earlier measure. The additional pollution reductions provided by this rule will help protect the public health.

Cleaning up power plants is critically important because particle pollution and ozone smog cause coughing and wheezing, trigger [asthma](#) attacks, send people to the emergency room and cause [heart attacks](#) and [strokes](#), as well as premature death. Millions of people are at risk from this pollution, including children, seniors, those with chronic lung diseases like asthma and COPD, and those with cardiovascular diseases and [diabetes](#). Today's proposal is an important step to protect public health, and will save between 14,000 and 36,000 lives a year. Nonetheless, more work is needed to truly protect the public.

The American Lung Association is encouraged that today's proposal creates a framework for additional pollution controls that can be implemented to address more protective air quality standards. The national standard for ozone is currently under review and the EPA is expected to announce a new standard by the end of August. The American Lung Association, along with other major public health and medical organizations, has called for an ozone standard of 60 parts per billion, the most protective level under consideration by the EPA. When the EPA sets the new standard, this regional power plant regulatory framework must be strengthened to provide further pollution reductions to help the states in the East and Midwest meet the new standard.

The American Lung Association will file detailed comments on the transport rule to recommend ways to strengthen the health benefits and ensure the pollution reductions are implemented as quickly as possible.

Source:  
American Lung Association

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*Published on Thursday, July 8, 2010 by The Huffington Post Investigative Fund*

## **Weighing Safety of Weed Killer in Drinking Water, EPA Relies Heavily on Industry-Backed Studies**

### **Agency Says Company's Evidence 'Scientifically More Robust' than Independent Research**

by Danielle Ivory, Huffington Post Investigative Fund

Companies with a financial interest in a weed-killer sometimes found in drinking water paid for thousands of studies federal regulators are using to assess the herbicide's health risks, records of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency show. Many of these industry-funded studies, which largely support atrazine's safety, have never been published or subjected to an independent scientific peer review.

Meanwhile, some independent studies documenting potentially harmful effects on animals and humans are not included in the body of research the EPA deems relevant to its safety review, the Huffington Post Investigative Fund has found. These studies include many that have been published in respected scientific journals.

Even so, the EPA says that it would be "very difficult for someone to put a thumb on the scale" to slant the outcome.

**Atrazine** is one of the most widely used herbicides in the U.S. An estimated 76 million pounds of the chemical are sprayed on corn and other fields in the U.S. each year, sometimes ending up in rivers, streams, and drinking water supplies. It has been the focus of intense scientific debate over its potential to cause cancer, birth defects, and hormonal and reproductive problems. As the Huffington Post Investigative Fund reported in a **series of articles** last fall, the EPA failed to warn the public that the weed-killer had been found at levels above federal safety limits in drinking water in at least four states. Some water utilities are suing Syngenta to have it pay their costs of filtering the chemical.

Now the EPA is re-evaluating the health risks of atrazine, which was **banned** in the European Union in 2004 due to a lack of evidence to support its safe use. That ban includes Switzerland, where atrazine's manufacturer, Syngenta, is headquartered. The EPA expects to announce results of its re-examination of the herbicide in September 2010. It could take action ranging from restrictions on its use on crops to an outright ban. Or it could permit continued use without additional restrictions.

The company, one of the world's largest agribusinesses, says the chemical has been used safely for decades and restrictions could prove devastating to farmers who are heavily dependent on the

inexpensive herbicide. Atrazine poses “no harm” to the general population or to drinking water supplies, said company spokesman Steven Goldsmith.

EPA records obtained by The Huffington Post Investigative Fund show that at least half of **the 6,611 studies** the agency is reviewing to help make its decision were conducted by scientists and organizations with a financial stake in atrazine, including Syngenta or its affiliated companies and research contractors.

More than 80 percent of studies on which the EPA are relying have never been published. This means that they have not undergone rigorous “peer review” by independent scientists, a customary method to ensure studies are credible and scientifically sound before they can be published in major journals.

At the same time several prominent studies by independent academic scientists in well-respected scientific journals – showing negative reproductive effects of atrazine in animals and humans – are absent from the EPA’s list.

That finding may raise concerns about how the agency is doing its work. Rep. Henry Waxman, chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which oversees environmental regulators, told the Investigative Fund, “it’s critically important that EPA use all of the information at its disposal.”

Agency scientists may review studies not on the list, but EPA senior policy analyst William Jordan said that the 6,611 studies are those considered “relevant to the assessment of atrazine.”

#### **‘Not Just Atrazine’**

EPA spokeswoman Betsaida Alcantara said the list was not exhaustive and that some studies may not be on the list because they were not given an eight-digit “master record identification number,” which the agency uses to keep track of studies. There is “no uniform practice” for assigning numbers to studies submitted by people other than those working for herbicide, fungicide or pesticide manufacturers, she added.

EPA officials said that with a limited budget the agency must rely heavily on research sponsored by parties with a stake in the outcome. The agency’s “test guidelines” governing how experiments are conducted – the types and number of lab animals to be used, for instance. These provide sufficient safeguards against skewed results, officials said.

“Companies have a very strong incentive to follow the guidelines,” said EPA senior analyst Jordan. “We hope and think that we have written the guidelines with enough detail that it would be very difficult for someone to put a thumb on the scale, as it were, to slant the outcome, [or] to make something look safer than it is.”

Jennifer Sass, a senior scientist specializing in health issues at the Natural Resources Defense Council, argues that relying on a company to test the safety of its own product – an “inherent conflict” of interest – is part of a larger pattern at the EPA. “It’s not just happening with atrazine,” she said.

Hundreds of herbicides, pesticides, and other chemicals are regulated by the EPA, whose decisions can have significant implications for public health and on the abilities of an array of multinational companies to earn billions of dollars in the U.S.

By law, industry influence often is built into the regulatory process of the federal government. At the Food and Drug Administration, for instance, clinical trials conducted by pharmaceutical companies are used to determine whether pills and devices work and are safe. Makers of pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides also must pay for studies on their products. If they meet agency rules for conducting the testing, the EPA must accept them.

### **The 'Funding Effect'**

But is industry-funded research always reliable? A pair of scientists funded by the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the EPA scrutinized a **Syngenta-funded Canadian study** – one that is not on the EPA's list. The scientists said they found numerous inaccuracies and misleading statements.

The scientists who questioned the study, University of South Florida biologists Jason Rohr and Krista McCoy, published **their critique** in the March 2010 issue of the journal *Conservation Letters*. In all, they tallied what they said were 122 inaccurate and 22 misleading statements, of which 96.5 percent appeared to support atrazine's safety. The widely cited study focused on the herbicide's effects on fish and other aquatic creatures.

Rohr and McCoy also asserted that the Canadian study, which was done in 2008, misrepresented more than 50 other studies. For example, it incorrectly suggested that only one scientist had demonstrated the chemical's gender-altering effects on frogs. In fact, several other scientists demonstrated such effects.

The study dismissed one of Rohr's papers as invalid, noting wrongly that the researcher had filtered atrazine out of a water tank while trying to assess the chemical's effect on the aquatic organisms in the tank.

The Canadian study also misrepresented results, figures, and conclusions of other studies, according to the University of South Florida biologists.

Rohr, who served on an EPA advisory panel examining atrazine last year, told the Investigative Fund that he felt compelled "to set the record straight given the potential policy and environmental implications of these misconceptions and inaccuracies."

The author of the Canadian study, University of Guelph (Ontario) biologist Keith Solomon, declined to respond to questions from the Investigative Fund about his financial ties to Syngenta, the company's influence, or the inaccuracies and mischaracterizations the South Florida biologists said they had uncovered. Solomon noted that other scientists had come to similar conclusions, and that governments in the U.S. and Australia had not found any significant risk to creatures living in water.

While the critiqued study is not on the EPA's list, several other studies by Solomon are.

Wendy Wagner, an expert in environmental policy at the University of Texas law school, said that the criticism of the Canadian study demonstrates a phenomenon sometimes referred to as “the funding effect.”

“It is next to impossible to squeeze all of the discretion out of a researcher, and when he has a strong incentive to find a particular result, the result can be unreliable and badly biased research,” said Wagner, an authority on the influence of politics and special interests on science. “There is compelling evidence that bias still pervades sponsored pesticide research – research that presumably is done in accord with EPA’s guidelines.”

Meanwhile, some independently-funded academic research published in major scientific journals is missing from the list of papers the EPA is using to make its decisions on atrazine. Absent are studies published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Environmental Health Perspectives, and Nature. Many works by independent academic scientists such as Tyrone Hayes and Rohr – who have demonstrated a range of potential reproductive and hormonal effects of the chemical – are not on the list.

Some peer-reviewed studies from prestigious journals fail to meet the agency’s standards, said EPA analyst Jordan, citing as an example work by scientists such as Hayes, who recently found that low doses of atrazine could turn male frogs into female frogs.

Jordan explained that the agency couldn’t rely on Hayes’ and the other scientists’ research in part because the government lacked protocols for testing chemicals on frogs. So the EPA developed those guidelines and asked Syngenta to study the issue. The company’s researchers reported that they were unable to replicate Hayes’ findings. Jordan said the Syngenta study “superceded” Hayes’ and the other scientists’ studies. The EPA, on its Website, **currently states** that atrazine causes no such adverse effects on frogs and that “no additional testing is warranted” to address the issue.

Environmental groups have in the past criticized the EPA for allowing chemical companies to wield disproportionate influence over regulatory decisions. While evaluating the safety of atrazine in 2003, the EPA allowed representatives from Syngenta to participate in closed-door negotiations with the agency, according to documents obtained by the NRDC in 2004.

### **Missing Evidence**

Dale Kemery, an EPA spokesman, defended the practice of omitting some studies. The agency’s safety “review may not include every study that has been conducted, since some may not meet the standards that are appropriate for a regulatory setting or they may not be on target for the issues to be assessed.”

The EPA considers industry-sponsored studies “scientifically more robust than are the studies generated by people in academia,” said Jordan, the agency’s senior policy analyst. “That’s generally because companies spend more money on their studies and can attend to details that are potentially important that people in academia just can’t afford to do.”

Jordan added that agency oversight of the thousands of unpublished studies on the list is just as rigorous as a peer-review by scientists prior to publication in a scientific journal. “I know that



people might not agree with this proposition, but I believe that the scientists at EPA constitute a peer-review,” he said. “Our scientists go over the studies with a fine tooth comb.”

EPA officials said they were not able to provide a list of all omitted research.

A spokeswoman for CropLife America, the Washington D.C.-based trade association that represents pesticide and herbicide manufacturers, said EPA oversight is thorough, regardless of whether studies have appeared in peer-reviewed journals.

“Whether or not they have been published, the studies submitted to EPA for registration support of pesticide products are subject to scientific review by EPA scientists that is equally, if not more, rigorous and demanding than the pre-publication peer review conducted by any scientific journal,” said spokeswoman Mary Emma Young.

Some people are skeptical about the rigor of the EPA’s scrutiny. “What worries me,” said the University of Texas’ Wagner, “is the possibility that there isn’t time or energy within EPA to give a lot of oversight to this unpublished, industry-funded research, especially when the number of unpublished studies for a chemical like atrazine are in the thousands.”

A former EPA official, epidemiologist Lynn Goldman, said it is normal and necessary for the agency to accept unpublished and industry-funded studies, most of which would not be interesting enough to publish in scientific journals.

“This is the way that the system was built by Congress. It could be changed but the EPA does not have the authority to turn the system upside down,” said Goldman, a former assistant administrator for toxic substances during the Clinton administration.

The existence of a list of relevant research for EPA review has played a prominent role in public arguments for the herbicide’s safety. Journalists, scientists, and advocates for atrazine have frequently cited the “6,000” studies.

In 2005, Anne Lindsay, then a top official in the EPA’s Office of Pesticide Programs, brought up the number of studies during congressional testimony. “Atrazine is one of the most well-examined pesticides in the marketplace,” she said, noting that “there are nearly 6,000 studies in EPA files on the human health and environmental effect of atrazine.”

Syngenta now cites the number in its press materials and on its website – not merely as a tally of studies but as proof of its safety. “Atrazine passes the most stringent, up-to-date safety requirements in the world,” said spokesman Paul Minehart. “In 2006, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) re-registered atrazine in 2006 based on the overwhelming evidence of safety from nearly 6,000 studies.”

#### EPA's List of Scientific Studies on Atrazine



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## 300,000 gas lines like those blamed in explosions run under Dallas-Fort Worth homes

01:10 PM CDT on Thursday, July 8, 2010

By RAY LESZCZYNSKI & ELIZABETH SOUDER / The Dallas Morning News

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About 300,000 steel gas supply lines serviced by [Atmos Energy](#) and blamed in several home explosions are in the Dallas-[Fort Worth](#) area, according to state regulators.

The Texas Railroad Commission's most recent field inspection showed that more than 100,000 are in the Fort Worth service area alone. Another 97,741 are in Dallas, and thousands more are in surrounding suburbs.

Commissioner [Michael Williams](#) proposed this week that Atmos and other utilities be required to replace 2.2 million steel lines statewide. About a quarter of those, 524,546, are in Atmos' Mid-Tex Division, which services North Texas. Williams is calling for new plastic lines, which won't shift and corrode like steel.

In North Texas alone, the project could cost more than \$500 million, which may be borne by customers.

The old service lines, installed in the 1960s, '70s and '80s, bring natural gas from pipelines under neighborhood streets to homes. They have been blamed in a handful of deadly explosions locally.

In 2006, an elderly [Wylie](#) couple died when a natural gas leak ignited a fire that burned their home. In 2007, an explosion in Cleburne killed two women and injured three other family members.

Last year, a home in [Mesquite](#) exploded, and Atmos decided to replace each of the 680 lines in the subdivision.

Atmos has expanded the replacement program beyond the Mesquite neighborhood. According to the Railroad Commission, Atmos has 52 work crews replacing service lines around North Texas, including in Mesquite, [Richardson](#), [Irving](#) and Dallas.

Mesquite public works officials said that the crews are averaging about 70 repairs per day. More than 2,000 fixes have been made in the city to date. Repairs have also included 133 additional "risers" — the pipes that stick out of the ground — as the current ones are spaced too far apart.

City inspectors meet Atmos officials and plan one week's worth of work at a time. The work is being performed in alleys behind homes. Four repair crews and two paving crews work each site.

State Rep. Robert Miklos, who represents Mesquite, does not agree with a plan to allow Atmos and

other providers to draw a profit while replacing the lines.

But officials in [Garland](#), the second largest city in Dallas County and the site of 13,255 of the lines, said Thursday they have had no contact with Atmos.

“Why should Atmos or any other utility profit from replacing their own dilapidated and dangerous infrastructure?” Miklos said in a press release. “It’s one thing for all of us to share in the costs of these long overdue safety upgrades, but does Atmos really deserve to make an additional profit out of our pockets just for doing the minimum to save lives?”



## NM task force to plan expanded power line system

Posted at: 07/08/2010 11:50 AM

By: Reed Upton, KOB.com



SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) - Gov. Bill Richardson has named a task force to plan the development of transmission lines in New Mexico to deliver power from renewable energy sources to customers.

Richardson said Thursday the task force will assist the state's Renewable Energy Transmission Authority in drafting the power system blueprint.

New transmission lines are considered essential for New Mexico and other states to expand the use of solar, wind and renewable energy sources.

The deputy secretary of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, Jim Noel, is the task force chairman. Other members include officials from utilities, an environmental group, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, White Sands Missile Range as well as legislators and former Interior Secretary Manual Lujan of Albuquerque.

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# Tests for oil keep Lake Alan Henry closed

**Posted:** July 8, 2010 - 1:33am



Provided photo

By Elliott Blackburn

AVALANCHE-JOURNAL

A future drinking water supply and popular summer spot could remain closed through the weekend as state officials try to determine the extent of the damage from an upstream oil spill earlier this week.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality sent off Lake Alan Henry water samples Wednesday to test for tell-tale traces of crude oil, regional director Jeff Bertl said. The commission closed the lake outside of Justiceburg indefinitely on Tuesday.

Testing could take up to two weeks, Bertl said.

"We're going to expedite the samples, obviously, to get them back as fast as we can," Bertl said.

A pair of small oil lines owned by Plains All American Pipeline LP broke Monday after heavy rains washed away their supporting river banks 15 miles northwest of the reservoir along the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos River. The company estimated 165 barrels, or 6,930 gallons, spilled into the reservoir's tributary.

The company stretched a 300-foot oil-catching boom across the river near its mouth into the reservoir, along with two redundant booms, said Ramona Nye, a spokeswoman for the Texas Railroad Commission, which is overseeing the cleanup effort.

More booms were installed upstream as part of the cleanup, she said in an e-mailed response to questions.

City, county and state officials have set up a base of operations at the lake to monitor the cleanup. State environmental regulators would look for the presence of any signs of crude oil in the lake, as well as any problems with drinking water quality resulting from

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the spill.

Todd Anderson, a professor of environmental chemistry with the The Institute of Environmental and Human Health at Texas Tech, said the small amount of oil and large body of water would help keep effects to a minimum.

"You might experience some localized high concentrations, but you'd see a pretty good dilution," Anderson said.

Some minor components of the crude spilled could have longer-term effects on local wildlife, he added.

Lubbock hopes to complete a \$267 million project to draw drinking water from the lake by 2012. The city supply would continue to have multiple sources, including well fields and a northern Panhandle reservoir, but Tuesday's shutdown revealed how quickly the city could lose a resource hoped to eventually supply half of Lubbock's drinking water.

Clyde Kitten, who supplies 43 homes in the North Ridge development along the lake's shore with drinking water, said he was cleared Wednesday morning to fill up his storage tanks with the higher-quality lake water before returning to wells.

Intakes for his water supply were on the other side of the lake from the mouth of the river. He'd only heard of "a little bit of rainbow along the shoreline" miles upstream in the river.

"Everybody's got this Gulf deal on their minds," Kitten said. "It's better safe than sorry, I guess, to do the samples, tests and make sure."

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By [robbinsmith](#) | 07/08/10 - 08:31 am

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### What a joke. City officials

By [Home\\_Owner](#) | 07/08/10 - 11:21 am

What a joke. City officials knew this could and would happen before that mud hole was built. This is just another way for them to raise prices on the water now.

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## Group wants turtle hatchling releases stopped

By Rob Boscamp

Originally published 07:13 p.m., July 7, 2010

Updated 03:33 a.m., July 8, 2010

CORPUS CHRISTI — An environmental group wants the Padre Island National Seashore to stop releasing Kemp's ridley sea turtle hatchlings because of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

But seashore officials said Wednesday the releases are required and not doing so could hinder their natural instincts.

More than 1,000 hatchlings have been released this week, said Donna Shaver, chief of sea turtle science and recovery at Padre Island National Seashore. An additional 400 will be released between Friday and Wednesday, she said.

On Wednesday, the Sea Turtle Restoration Project asked the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to move hatchlings to a research and rehabilitation lab in Galveston where they could be raised until it is safe to release them.

Shaver said that if the hatchlings are kept in research and rehabilitation facilities for too long, it could prevent them from returning to the beaches where they hatched.

"You're not ensured 100 percent survival to hold them in captivity," she said.

Because the turtles are an endangered species, the federal permits allowing the incubation of turtle eggs require that seashore officials also release the hatchlings.

But Carole Allen, Gulf director of the Sea Turtle Restoration Project, said sea turtles are being carried by currents in the Gulf of Mexico into the oil spill areas. For that reason, hatchlings would be better off at the National Marine Fisheries Service Galveston sea turtle research and rehabilitation laboratory. The lab can handle about 2,000 hatchlings, she said.

"We're not saying to keep them in the facilities for a long time." Allen said. "We're saying keep them until there is water that is safe for them."

Additional aquariums and turtle hospitals also could be enlisted for the project,



according to a letter signed by Allen and others with the Sea Turtle Restoration Project.

Shaver said that Seashore officials will continue to monitor the oil spill in the Gulf Coast, and if the spill does reach the seashore, contingency plans would be discussed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to release the turtles elsewhere.

"Nobody wants to intentionally put them in harm's way," she said.



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## AEP Texas, Braselton Homes and Hogan Homes receive EPA award

By Staff reports

Originally published 08:03 a.m., July 8, 2010

Updated 08:03 a.m., July 8, 2010

CORPUS CHRISTI — AEP Texas, Braselton Homes and Hogan Homes on Wednesday received the 2010 Energy Star Leadership in Housing awards for promoting energy-efficient construction and environmental protection.

The three companies participated in a program that promotes the construction of new homes that protect the environment. Energy Star homes are at least 15 percent more energy efficient than homes built to local code. Features include effective insulation systems, high-performance windows and properly-sized and installed heating and cooling equipment. The program began in 1995 and more than a million such homes have been built.



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## Cracks Appear in Texas' RadWaste Program

POSTED BY | JULY 7, 2010 | 11:42AM

Thanks to outspoken Texas politicians like and Rep. Joe Barton — who preach that regulation and oversight kills jobs — the state has garnered a reputation for being hostile toward health concerns, environmental controls and federal intervention.

That's why recent news concerning two Texas agencies and their decision to take a more measured stance with private entities comes as great relief. The entity in question, Waste Control Specialists (WCS), was previously greenlighted to dispose of radioactive waste in a remote area in West Texas. WCS' owner, billionaire and major Republican donor Harold Simmons, has another holding, NL Industries, which is well-known in environmental justice circles for its around the country.

The WCS dump site has been the center of heated debate among scientists, environmentalists, and lawmakers since the application process for licensing began in 2004. about the dump's location and the presence of groundwater, namely, the Ogallala Aquifer.

Recently, two agencies, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Compact Commission (TLLRWDC or Texas Compact), have taken bold steps to slow down WCS' expansive aspirations by 1) enforcing regulations and 2) withdrawing proposed rules that could have opened up the site to the nuclear waste of 36 states. This might not sound like great strides, but in a regulatory situation where most of the final decisions regarding WCS are made by Gov. Perry appointees — and Simmons is a well-known financial backer of Perry — this is a big shift.

Last month TCEQ announced that WCS will be served with a Notice of Violation for storing non-compact waste beyond the 365 days allowed under their license. A WCS spokesperson said that they disagree with the agency that oversees radioactive substances for the state of Texas: "We have a difference of opinion and we're continuing discussions to resolve the issue." TCEQ inspectors also detected cracks up to an inch wide on the asphalt pad that functions as a barrier between waste and the ground. In a May 25 letter from TCEQ to the company, inspectors requested more data on the pad such as engineering evaluations and a history of repairs. WCS described the cracks as "superficial."

WCS is licensed by the state of Texas to dispose of radioactive waste from both compact states and federal sources. ("Compact" refers to a compact entered into by two or more states pursuant to the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1985, established to shift oversight and responsibility of the disposal of waste to states.)

Currently, Texas has one other member in its compact: Vermont. The withdrawal of proposed rules governing the acceptance of non-compact last month by the Texas Compact marked a shift in what many assumed would be the continued green-lighting of WCS' business plan. One argument the company has made concerning non-compact waste is that the site is not financially viable if other states' waste streams are not allowed in (WCS has not publicly divulged the projected earnings from the disposal of federal waste). Others say the site is first and foremost a fulfillment of obligations of the Texas-Vermont compact and that the compact commission is responsible to citizens, not the financial success of a private entity. According to State Rep. Lon Burnam, "It's clearly our responsibility to manage our waste and our sister's waste from Vermont. It is not our responsibility to become the nation's nuclear waste dump."

Last month, the was set to vote on proposed rules governing non-compact waste as well as respond to public comments. At the last minute, decisions were made to postpone the vote and re-draft the rules. Once the new rules are written, they are required to be published in the Texas Registry for a minimum of 30 days. Once posted, the public will have at least 30 days to comment before a final vote is taken. The commission has yet to announce a date for the release of reworked rules or when their next meeting might be held.

How important is the work of these agencies? Very. These two commissions are gatekeepers, charged with the serious business of regulation and oversight that the disposal of radioactive waste demands. And, according to TCEQ spokesperson Terry Clawson, the final say regarding volume of waste does not rest with the Texas Compact. "TCEQ has jurisdiction over low-level radioactive waste disposal, including capacity," wrote Clawson.

He also added that "There are pending conditions of the license and an amendment currently being processed by the agency. The disposal facility is not yet operational nor has it received TCEQ written approval to begin facility construction."

The slowdown of what has seemed inevitable to many, may be related to TCEQ's technical team's recent concerns with WCS shifting conceptual models and the .

The wheels of regulation and oversight turn slowly in this part of the country, but there are hopeful signs that the lights have at least turned from green to yellow for now.



A state environmental inspector looks at cracks on an asphalt pad at the Waste Control Specialist site, some 30 miles west of Andrews, Texas, where low-level radioactive waste is being stored.

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Laray Polk is a writer and multimedia artist. Her articles have appeared in print in *The*

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## Why the Congress Needs To Follow the EPA's Example

posted by: [GinaMarie Cheeseman](#) 15 hours ago

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The outlook for Congress passing legislation that would set a price on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions looks dim. However, the Environmental Protection Agency is setting an example on how to implement pollution regulation. GHG emissions are atmospheric pollution, after all.

A good example is the EPA's proposed regulations to reduce pollution drifting across state lines in 31 eastern states and the District of Columbia. Called the transport rule, it would reduce power plant emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide to meet state-by-state emission reductions. The EPA is using the 'good neighbor' provision of the Clean Air Act to implement the transport rule, which would regulate upwind state emissions that contribute to pollution problems in downwind states.

By 2014, the transport rule and other EPA and state actions would reduce sulfur dioxide emission by 71 percent over 2005 levels. Nitrogen oxide would decrease by 52 percent. Both sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide form fine particle pollution and ground-level ozone (smog). Power plants would have to install new equipment or use lower-sulfur fuels, the [McClatchy News Service](#) reported.

If implemented, the transport rule would save over \$120 billion in annual health benefits in 2014. It would also avoid an estimated 14,000 to 36,000 premature deaths, 23,000 nonfatal heart attacks, 21,000 cases of acute bronchitis, 240,000 cases of aggravated asthma, and 1.9 million days when people miss work or school because of ozone and particle pollution related symptoms. The cost of compliance is \$2.8 billion in 2014.



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The transport rule would replace the 2005 Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) which the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ordered the EPA to revise in 2008. The EPA will take public comment for 60 days after the rule is published in the Federal Register and will hold public hearings. If implemented, it would go into effect in 2012.

"This rule is designed to cut pollution that spreads hundreds of miles and has enormous negative impacts on millions of Americans," said EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson. "We're working to limit pollution at its source, rather than waiting for it to move across the country. The reductions we're proposing will save billions in health costs, help increase American educational and economic productivity, and -- most importantly -- save lives."

"What this is attempting to do is give people cleaner air to breathe," said Gina McCarthy, EPA's assistant administrator for air and radiation. Read more: [pollution](#), [epa](#), [proposal](#), [global warming](#), [transport rule](#)

20 comments

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Marilyn D. says

Jul 8, 2010 8:53 AM

There's so much money being spent on the cleanup in the gulf...if that had been invested in clean energy BEFORE the spill...we'd be in great shape!

The government has to set some priorities and get some common sense instead of holding their hands out for the corporate cash they get to pay them for turning their eyes away and allowing these companies to destroy the planet.

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Mary Carolyn Perry says

Jul 8, 2010 8:50 AM

I admire the EPA under Obama...for they are trying and succeeding in small steps to take care of many of the problems left by Bush's eight years! If the other party was as concerned for our climate instead of not wanting anything Obama proposes to succeed, due to their coziness with BiG oil and chemical companies, we would be much further along! (It also includes many Democrats who vote for the polluters!. Vote them all out...our planets is in peril.

[send green star](#)

Dianne D. says

Jul 8, 2010 8:42 AM

Come November vote for those that care about the environment, clean air and water. The career politicians need to go.

[send green star](#)

Joe V. says

Jul 8, 2010 8:36 AM

The EPA, another government agency filled with hypocrites and blowhards. The real answer is to sweep this Congress under the rug and elect people who give a damn about the working class. This spend, spend, spend mentality has got to go. There will be less



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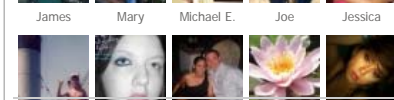
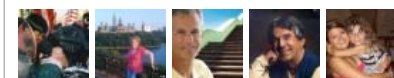
#### Members Project from American Express

Over the next few weeks, we'll be profiling the winners of the first American Express Members Project voting cycle. This week, get to know the National Trust for Historic Preservation!



**Congrats National Trust for Historic Preservation!**

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# Recycled cigarette butts can keep steel from rusting

By Stephanie Steinberg, USA TODAY

When you think recycling, newspapers, plastic bottles and aluminum cans probably come to mind. But one researcher wants to add cigarette butts to the list.

Jun Zhao, a Ph.D. student in the School of Energy and Power Engineering at Xi'an Jiaotong University in [China](#), and a team of scientists found that cigarette butts can be put to good use. Their study, which is published in the American Chemical Society journal *Industrial & Engineering Chemistry Research*, shows that extracts of cigarette butts that have been submerged in water can help prevent steel from rusting.

Application of the cigarette material to N80, a type of steel, could save millions of dollars a year that oil industries spend on steel repair, the study says. The research suggests that nine chemicals in cigarette butts, including nicotine, work to inhibit corrosion.

In an e-mail interview from China, Zhao explained that application of cigarette butts as a corrosion inhibitor could reduce the use of chemical materials applied to steel today and cut down on cigarette pollution.

According to the study, 4.5 trillion cigarette butts pollute the environment every year.

Bryan Early, a policy associate for environmental advocacy group Californians Against Waste, says cigarette butts are a major contributor to marine debris. "Cigarette butts are generally considered ... the most commonly found piece of litter in beach cleanup studies," Early says. They pose a hazard for species that choke on butts or are killed by the toxins, Early says.

But Early says he doesn't believe it's practical to make cigarette butts a recyclable material. He adds that his group would never attempt it.

"I couldn't even imagine a situation where you would develop a market for the recycling of little packets of junk," he says. "There's no way."

But Michael DenDekker, a Democratic assemblyman in the New York State Assembly, is sponsoring a bill that calls for a cigarette butt recycling program for New York. The bill — proposed as a result of Zhao's research — plans to establish at least one recycling facility in each county and offer a consumer refund of 1 cent per cigarette.

Bill Phelps, spokesman for [Philip Morris USA](#), the nation's largest tobacco manufacturer, said he could not comment on the study because he hadn't reviewed it. But he said Philip Morris recognizes that cigarettes are a "significant contributor" to litter in the environment.

"Philip Morris USA is working to help address this issue by partnering with others, including [Keep America Beautiful](#), in educating smokers that cigarettes are litter and they should be disposed of properly," he said.

Zhao acknowledges that cigarette litter is widespread and that it would be difficult for individuals or groups to organize litter collection. Yet he is hopeful that garbage collection agencies may one day lead an initiative focused on cigarette butt recycling.

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## Budget in the red, NOPD lays off 50 employees

by Bigad Shaban / Eyewitness News

[wwltv.com](http://wwltv.com)

Posted on July 6, 2010 at 10:15 PM

Updated yesterday at 8:54 AM

NEW ORLEANS -- At the center of Valerie Wimberly's world is her 10-year-old son Terrence, Jr. They both call New Orleans East home, although nearby Methodist Hospital no longer does. Emergency response times are a concern here, especially now. At the city's 911 call center 23 operators have been laid off.

"To have my service delayed for some reason because we don't have a call person to take a call, that's devastating," Wimberly said.

At the New Orleans Police Department 27 other employees have also been let go, including 12 recruits, who up until Tuesday were still training in the police academy.

The total of 50 NOPD employees are the latest casualties of a growing an estimated \$67 million budget deficit.

"Obviously, people were spending more than what they had been given authority to spend," said City Council president Arnie Fielkow.

Fielkow, also chair of the council's budget committee, said the overspending has often been through employee overtime. According to the city, the biggest overspender has been the NOPD, consuming \$11 million more than they were supposed to during the first five months of 2010.

"The overtime issue is one that in the past has been used in the summer time primarily," said Fielkow. "We aren't doing that this summer, so how we got from January to May with an \$11 million overage in overtime, to me, reflects really poor management at the time."



The finger is clearly being pointed at former Police Chief Warren Riley and former Mayor Ray Nagin, who both left office on May 3.

Mayor Mitch Landrieu, during his State of the City speech on Thursday, is expected to announce more details on how he hopes to bring the city out of the red. In the past, the administration has said nothing will be off the table, including furloughs and layoffs.

When asked about this latest round of layoffs, a spokesperson for Landrieu referred Eyewitness News to current NOPD Chief Ronald Serpas, saying he could best answer our questions. But after arriving at police headquarters, we were told Serpas wouldn't be taking any. Two hours later, the NOPD released a statement, calling the layoffs "a necessary step." Bob Young, NOPD spokesman, went on to write that "staffing and scheduling will be adjusted to minimize the effects of the dismissals."

Bryan Lagarde, who heads the non-profit group Project NOLA, which tracks calls to the city's 911 dispatch center, isn't as optimistic.

"They're probably, at times, are going to be greater back logs for calls waiting for service," he said.

The former NOPD cop also fears less call takers will push operators to hang up sooner in order to tackle the next emergency.

"If they can't spend enough time with each caller, not enough information might be covered," said Lagarde. "Then, obviously the less information the police officer is going to work with."

That doesn't sit well for Wimberly. Just this past weekend, she lost a family member in Mississippi because the ambulance didn't arrive fast enough. A sadness she never wants to feel again.

"That's not a reason for someone to lose their life," she said.

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